THE DOGRA RULERS OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

SAT PRAKASH SURI

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Dedicated

This book is affectionately dedicated to my parents, Mrs. Sita Suri and Mr. Kishan Chand Ji Suri.
and
In the fond memory of Her Highness, Raj Mata Yasho Rajaya Laxmi who died on May 24, 2009.

No friend’s complaint, no kind domestic tear Pleased thy pale ghost, or graced thy mournful bier. By foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed, By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed, By foreign hands thy humble grave adorned, By strangers honoured, and by strangers mourned !

Sir Alexander Pope

FOREWORD

By

Dr. Karan Singh

The history of Dogra Rajput clans is lost in the mists of times. They are Suryavanshi Rajputs who, millennia ago, migrated from the desert plains of Rajasthan up to the salubrious hills in and around Jammu in the western Himalayas. The history of the rulers of Jammu dates back to the period of

Ramayana and they trace their lineage to the Ikshvaku or Suryavanshi (Solar) dynasty in which Lord Rama of Ayodhya was born. The Dogras venerate Lord Rama as their family deity and call themselves 'Raghuvanshi' Rajputs.

The history of the Dogras is not as well researched and written up as those of many other clans elsewhere in India. A comparatively small group of migrants from the plains, over centuries came to hold, through their grit and determination, an important place in the history of Jammu and its surrounding areas as its rulers. With the inception of Mughal rule, the Dogra rulers went into eclipse for nearly three centuries till Maharaja Ranjit Singh wrested the Jammu area from the tyrannical Afghan rulers and made it a part of his kingdom. My ancestor, Gulab Singh of the Jamwal Dogra clan, played a key role in this venture. Impressed by Gulab Singh's strategy and valour, Maharaja Ranjit Singh invested him with the title of 'Raja' and gave him Jammu and the adjacent areas as his fiefdom (jagir). Through his vision, sagacity, insight into governance, valour and versatility in the art of warfare the indomitable Raja Gulab Singh vastly expanded his territories to include the Kashmir valley and its adjacent areas, and beyond it the northern highlands or Balwaristan comprising the tribal areas of Hunza, Gilgit, Chilas, Yasin and Ishkoman. From time immemorial Ladakh had formed Tibet's salience into the subcontinent. Under Raja Gulab Singh's leadership, his spirited General Zorawar Singh, one of the greatest soldiers that India has ever produced, mounted expeditions into Ladakh's difficult terrain and conquered it. Thus Maharaja Gulab Singh came to hold sovereignty over four vast and totally disparate regions, Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh and Balwaristan that together constituted the state of Jammu & Kashmir, the largest Indian state in British ruled India. The British signed the Treaty of Amritsar with him in 1946 that recognized him as 'Maharaja' and his sovereignty over the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir over which he held sway.

His successor Maharaja Ranbir Singh was a truly remarkable personality. It was he who gave the Ranbir Penal Code to the State which is still in operation. He built the magnificent Raghunath Temple complex and the great Ranbireshwar Temple in Jammu as well as many other temples in the surrounding areas such as Parmandal and Uttar Vahini. He

collected Sanskrit scholars and published several significant compendiums on various issues including astrology, medicine and rituals. He collected many thousands of Sanskrit manuscripts from around the country and set up the great Sanskrit library in the Raghunath Temple which is now known as the Sri Ranbir Sanskrit Research Institute. The remarkable thing is that, recognizing his great abilities, Maharaja Gulab Singh had appreciated and installed Ranbir Singh as ruler in his own life time, a very rare occurrence in Indian history.

Maharaja Pratap Singh ruled for 40 years and went through several very difficult periods because the British were becoming more aggressive at that time. In fact, he was even accused of hobnobbing with the growing Russian Empire, and was temporarily deposed until the Amrita Bazaar Patrika in Kolkata exposed the intrigue in a famous article entitled ‘Condemned Unheard’. Maharaja Pratap Singh’s two younger brothers Raja Ram Singh and Raja Amar Singh were not always on the same wavelength but both predeceased him. Maharaja Pratap Singh was a pious and generous person who strove to improve the lot of his subjects.

My father Maharaja Hari Singh was a complete contrast. He was clear, active and, where necessary, aggressive. He instituted a series of social reforms far in advance of his times. Not only did he abolish the cruel practice of ‘Begar’ or Forced Labour, he also declared that all temples in his State would be thrown open to Dalits, even though some conservative elements tried to oppose him on this ground. He was a crack-shot and held a world record in Duck shooting. He was also a Polo player and a great patron of the Turf in Mumbai. Unfortunately, towards the end of his rule, the whole situation took a dramatic turn for the worse, as a result of which he left the State in 1948 never to return. I have described these events in some detail in my Autobiography (Oxford University Press).

The Dogras thus produced four rulers - Maharaja Gulab Singh, Maharaja Ranbir Singh, Maharaja Pratap Singh and my father Maharaja Hari Singh. It was my historic privilege to spearhead the transition from feudalism to democracy in Independent India.

Barring scattered and generally negative references, the history of this geopolitically sensitive area and its Dogra rulers have been largely ignored in mainstream Indian historiography, and most books written by British and Sikh historians have a strong anti-Dogra bias. This book “The Dogra Rulers of Jammu & Kashmir” by Sat Prakash Suri of Jammu, clearly a labour of love, is an attempt to redress the balance. The bibliographies appended to each chapter show the sustained effort the author has put in to piece together historical details of my ancestors who ruled over Jammu & Kashmir for a century. I commend him for his efforts, and also recommend the book to all those who are interested in the history of a region that is at the crossroads of Central Asia and, even today, strategically, geopolitically and politically very sensitive.

(Karan Singh) Baisakhi,
13 April, 2011

PREFACE

This book is the result of studies which I pursued after settling down at Jammu after more than three decades of association with the film profession at Mumbai.

I have been fascinated by Dogra history since my student days. The interest in the subject was inculcated by my father who was a repository of anecdotes related to Dogra rulers and appreciated their pro-people policies which they implemented with great gusto.

Maharaja Gulab Singh unified the three regions of the State into one political entity and extended its boundaries to Tibet. The three regions which he tagged together, that is, Jammu, Kashmir and Frontier areas, were culturally, ethnically and religiously different from each other. A horrendous job which he completed with his far-sighted vision.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh consolidated the territories of the State and put it on the fast track of economic development.
Maharaja Pratap Singh, though remained embroiled in controversies, continued the thread of reforms initiated by his predecessors.

Maharaja Hari Singh's name became synonymous with reforms for modernizing the State. He epitomized the positive spirit of life and took a leap to improve the seamy lives of the most vulnerable classes of society, a legacy which he inherited from his forefathers.

I am grateful to many people. The first and foremost of all them is Maharaja, Dr. Karan Singh Ji, a philosopher turned statesman and a great educationist; internationally acclaimed humanitarian, a great philanthropist, and presently a Rajya Sabha member, for going through the typed manuscript and correcting the script with valuable suggestions.

I remain obliged to Mr. Kuldeep Sawhney of M/s Sunder Das Kuldeep Sawhney, Jewellers of Jain Bazar, Jammu, who very kindly introduced me to Mr. Raghuvir Singh Pathania of Amar Mahal Museum and Library. Mr. Pathania suggested a number of books to me and he very honestly guided me at every step for the pursuit of books related to Dogra history.

Second on line comes Dr. S.L Abrol, former Senior Scientific Officer, University Science Instrumentation Centre (USIC), University of Jammu and Dr. B.L Mehta, former Scientific Officer, Post-graduate Department of Chemistry, University of Jammu, for giving valuable suggestions of immense importance related to Dogra rulers.

Dr. A.K Sahni, Scientific Officer, Post-graduate Department of Geology, University of Jammu and Sardar Charan Singh, former Assistant Librarian, Post-graduate Department of History for their guidance related to the subject.

I remain obliged to Sudershan Kumar Kolhi, retd. Assistant Commissioner Development with a scholarly bent of mind; Dr. Arti Pandoh Gupta of Government. Science College, Jammu; Mr. Subash Choudhary and Mr. Surjeet Singh Jamwal, Managing Director and Director Operations, JK Media Network and Rajinder Kumar Badyal, Inspector in J&K Police, without whose help this book would have never been possible.

Mr. Kharaiti Lal Choudhary and Mr. Sushil Kumar Koushal, both benevolent people deserve gratitude for supporting me during tough times. My sons-in-law, Mr. Raman Nagyal and Mr. Harish Koushal who conscientiously went through the ordeal of completing the typing of the manuscript.

I acknowledge the love which my daughters, Nitu Suri Koushal and Anu Suri Nagyal extended to me by preparing the initial notes. They contributed their precious time for me regardless of their responsibilities towards their families.

My thanks are due to Mr. Karam Singh of Amar Mahal Museum and Library for his encouragement to complete the book.

I remain eternally indebted to my elder brother, Mr. Suraj Parkash Suri, a fatherly figure, who remains a source of inspiration and a guiding force behind me in the pursuit of my goal.

Of course I am thankful to my wife, Mrs. Saroj Suri who tolerated all my absurdities during this period.
The time I spent in completing the book runs into many summers' labour.

Sat Prakash Suri Sita Kishan Niwas Krishna Nagar,

Dated: April 5, 2010 Dogra Mohalla, Jammu. Jammu

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Gujja Singh

Dhrov Dev

Ranjit Dev Balwant Dev Ghunsar Dev Surat Singh

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Sampuran Singh Chet Singh Kishore Singh

Devi Singh Raghubir Singh GULAB SINGH Dhian Singh Suchet Singh

Udham Sohan Ranbir Jamiat Chiman Singh Singh Singh Singh Singh

Hira Jawahar Moti

Singh Singh Singh

Pratap Singh Ram Singh Amar Singh

Hari Singh Karan Singh

MAHARAJA GULAB SINGH (1792 - 1858)
1

Jammu and Kashmir State as it stood on the map of India on August 15, 1947, the day India's partition came into existence on March 16, 1846, by virtue of the Amritsar Treaty concluded that day between Gulab Singh in person and the representatives of Lord Hardinge, the then British Viceroy and Governor General of India. By his ceaseless and untiring efforts, political manipulations and shrewd strategies, Gulab Singh was able to carve out an independent state of his own which produced four rulers who contributed tremendously to its stability, consolidation, purging the administration from corrupt practices and modernizing it with innovative measures. The successive rulers of the State including Maharaja Gulab Singh remained plagued by British diplomacy and the contrivances which they employed on one or another pretext and did not let the rulers execute the propeople policies for their betterment.

The three regions of the State, namely Jammu, Kashmir and Frontier districts, which he integrated together into a single political entity in view of the diversity of population and distinct cultures[1] had never been attempted by any one in the past. It was a great challenge and monumental task which he perfected with the clarity of farsighted vision and precision. After the creation of the State by Maharaja Gulab Singh during the middle of the 19th century, no new Princely State was formed in the Indian subcontinent in the ensuing times. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh

in June 1839, the Sikh State had become a bed of bloodshed, anarchy and there broke out factional fighting among the chiefs owing to the instability in the Punjab State. In September 1845, Jawahar Singh was executed by his soldiers and the Sikh State was again bereft of a Prime Minister to lead its affairs. Gulab Singh, who was engaged in handling the affairs of his own principality, was asked to take charge of the Sikh-State but he point-blank refused to shoulder the responsibilities of the Sikh State which had proved a fatal occupation for his brothers and nephew as Dhian Singh, Suchet Singh and Hira Singh were murdered in this anarchy. The Lahore Durbar and its chiefs had made every nasty attempt to eliminate the Dogra family but only Gulab Singh had survived from their trap and thirst for blood. The Khalsa chiefs and Rani Jindian were clear in their motives that they bore no goodwill to Gulab Singh[2].

2

The status of affairs immediately before the last and most decisive battle of the AngloSikh war which was fought at Sobraon, a small village on the banks of Sutlej River on February 10, 1846 had degenerated into chaos, internal strife and factional infighting that paralyzed the administrative machinery of the Sikh State. The State had spiralled out of control and its credibility had ebbed beyond recovery. This was the fiercest battle that the British had ever fought in India. The Sikhs fought with full might, undaunted valour and courage in which the victory of the British seemed imminent[3]. Both Lal Singh, the Prime Minister of the Lahore Wazarat and Teja Singh, the Commander-in-Chief betrayed the Sikh forces and turned their backs on this war[4]. Lord Hugh Gough, the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces described this war as the Waterloo of India in which they inflicted the final deadly blow to the Sikh-State[5].

The once most powerful Sikh empire became financially bankrupt and thus was not in a position to pay the war indemnity of one and a half crore of rupees imposed by the British. Instead they agreed to part with their hilly and mountainous tracts east of the River Indus and west of the River Ravi including the provinces of Kashmir and Hazara. ‘Lal Singh’s strategy was to deprive Gulab Singh of his territory and at the same time to scuttle the

British demands but they had their own new combinations and permutations and they accepted the transfer of the areas offered to them'[6]. Lal Singh's shrewd game plan was to obstruct the British design to hand over Kashmir to Gulab Singh so he instigated it's Governor, Sheikh Imam-ud-Din not to pass on the control of Kashmir to him[7].

The Governor General warned the Sikh authorities that the Lahore Treaty be implemented as the British Government would give every possible help to Gulab Singh in compelling Sheikh Imam-ud-Din to evacuate Kashmir at its earliest, holding the Sikh Durbar responsible for its gross violation of the Lahore Treaty[8].

A pitched battle was fought in Maisuma between the Dogra forces under the command of Hukum Chand and the local forces led by Mirza Faqirullah in which Gulab Singh's most trusted wazir, Lakhpat, along with some officers, was killed[9]. But when Imam-ud-Din found that the British were determined to use force against him to carry out their Treaty with Gulab Singh, his calculations failed him. Circumstances took a dramatic turn when Sheikh Imamud-Din came to know that a mixed force of the British and Sikhs was promptly dispatched under the command of Sardar Mangal Singh and Kahan Singh Maan to evacuate Kashmir for Raja Gulab Singh because Sheikh Imam-ud-Din had no stomach for a long fight against the British. He was simply using Kashmir as a ploy to secure favourable terms from the British.

According to the 'Life of Hardinge', "it was necessary to weaken the Sikhs by depriving them of Kashmir. The real fact was that no one had imagined that the Punjab would become a British Province in a short time. It was a good stroke of strategy by the British administrators in India to weaken the Sikh Durbar, by rewarding one who had been favourable to their cause. The British Government took away with one hand and gave with the other as the exigencies of the case required". If there was any loophole in this transaction, it lay with the Governor General who was in a hurry to create the State in order to show his prowess. Before signing the Amritsar Treaty Raja Gulab Singh was a defacto ruler of Jammu.

The Treaty of Amritsar was concluded on 16, March 1846, between himself in person and the representatives of the Governor General, Lord Hardinge, by virtue of which Gulab Singh paid a huge price of seventy five lakhs and obtained complete control over the territories of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh and Baltistan. Plus he bought freedom and liberty for the Kashmiris[12].

Gilgit, permanently occupied by the Sikhs where they had been called to help against Gaur Rehman, the eldest son of the ruler of Yasin, who had conquered it, went over to the sovereignty of Gulab Singh consequent to this treaty[13]. According to Article IX of the Amritsar Treaty, the British Government were to give their support to him in protecting his territories from foreign aggression. According to Article X, Gulab Singh was to acknowledge the supremacy of the British.

It was to the great credit of Gulab Singh that at fifty-four, he became the ruler of a vast state and retained complete control over it which was ethnically, culturally, linguistically and geographically different from one region to another.

In the north-east, the State was bordered by Tibet, in the north its borders touched Sinkiang, in the north-west by Uzbekistan and Afghanistan and in the west by the North West Frontier Provinces. It became legally an integral part of the Indian Union on October 26, 1947, when Maharaja Hari Singh had a voluntary accession of the State after it was ruthlessly raided by the tribals with the active support of the regular Pak army.

Gulab Singh’s cherished dream of becoming the independent ruler of the State was realized as predicted by his mentor, Baba Prem Das of village Sui Simbly in the vicinity of Kanachak in Jammu[14].

3

Gulab Singh was born at six minutes past four on the morning of October 21, 1792 into a petty Dogra Rajput family at Anderwah near Samba. After his birth, Mian Kishore Singh, the father of the child asked the family priest to suggest a name for the newly-born infant and to prepare his horoscope. The priest plucked a rose flower and placed it on the child’s palm and told

Mian Kishore Singh that from henceforth, the babe would be called Gulab Singh. He was an extremely ambitious, manipulative and shrewd statesman who rose to be the founder of the Dogra dynasty during the middle of the 19th century. His father, Mian Kishore Singh, held a Jagir at Anderwah but Gulab Singh's youth was moulded by his grandfather, Mian Zorawar Singh, who trained him in all the manly arts. The Dogra Rajput family belonged to the Kachwaha clan whose head was once the ruler of Jaipur[15].

He was a descendant in the direct male line from Rajah Dhruv Dev, the Rajput Prince of the Suryavanshi dynasty who ruled over Jammu during the 18th century[16]. Gulab Singh was a great soldier and a visionary who applied his diplomacy so superbly that his contemporaries referred to him as 'Ulysses of the Hills' and 'Talleyrand of the East'[17]. His sharp wit combined with remarkable level headedness helped him to survive politically in the turbulent times in which he lived[18].

4

'Accounts of heroism, the intrepidity and meteoric rise of Gulab Singh' as the founder of Jammu and Kashmir State dates back to 1808 when at the tender age of sixteen, a paragon of youth and valour, he distinguished himself in the defence of Jammu. Ranjit Singh asked the administrator of Jammu, Mian Mota, the elder brother of Gulab Singh's grandfather to send Gulab Singh in his service after being told about his prowess as a soldier who actively participated in the battle fought on the southern bank of River Tawi against the Sikhs. Enlisted as a soldier in Ranjit Singh's army at Daska, a small village a few miles away from Sialkot district where Ranjit Singh was camping after annexing the small local principalities. Imbued with the spirit of adventure and gallantry, Gulab Singh rose rapidly and made a name for himself as a brilliant and astute war strategist of Ranjit Singh.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh by this time was not yet renowned but merely a rising Sikh ruler who had not even earned the sobriquet of the 'Lion of Punjab'[19]. His empire which later on extended from the Pamirs to Sind and

from Peshawar to Sutlej and included within it not only Punjab but the territories of Jammu and Kashmir, was then only in its making[20].

Sardar Nihar Singh Attariwala and Bhai Hukuma Singh Chimni had narrated the dare-devil and thrilling deeds of Gulab Singh to Ranjit Singh when as a bristling youth, he participated in the battle fought on the bank of River Tawi between the Jammu forces under the Command of Mian Mota and the Sikh army led by Bhai Hukuma Singh Chimni and Misr Dewan Chand in 1808[21].

Gulab Singh's prowess and agility as a soldier wielding his sword with deadly effect attracted the attention of Bhai Hukuma Singh Chimni, the enemy commander. This was the fifth attack on Jammu by the Sikh forces in which they inflicted heavy casualties and financial losses on the Jammuites[22]. Mian Mota and Alam Singh Akhnooria negotiated on behalf of Raja Jeet Singh with the Sikh commanders. As a result of these negotiations, Jeet Singh accepted Ranjit Singh's supremacy over Jammu and agreed to pay seventy-three thousand as annual tribute[23].

The in-fighting and political turmoils were at their height in Jammu in the first quarter of the 19th century. Raja Jeet Singh had died after a prolonged illness in April 1820. Mian Mota was murdered by a conspiracy hatched by Rani Bandral, an ambitious and intriguing woman, along with Dewan Ajit Singh who was a sworn enemy of Gulab Singh. Mian Mota was assassinated by her contract-killers-Tardu and Satru because she was not in favour of her unclein-law's rule over Jammu entrusted by her husband, Raja Jeet Singh[24].

Gulab Singh and Dhian Singh avenged the murder of Mian Mota when they both noticed the killers Tardu and Satru on their way to the Lahore Durbar as they had been employed by Kharak Singh as requested by Rani Bandral[25].

Both brothers murdered Tardu and Satru in broad daylight which created a sensation in Lahore. Guards at the Durbar did not allow Gulab Singh to enter the seat of power with arms. Ranjit Singh brushed aside this gory incident and asked Gulab Singh to be alert in future. Dhian Singh was put

under the protection of Jamadar Khushal Singh considered to be the most powerful person at the Sikh Durbar[26].

In this situation which was riddled with crisis and chaos, Jammu's rule passed onto the Sikh State and Dewan Bhawani Das was appointed its administrator and Jammu was allotted as a jagir to Kharak Singh by Ranjit Singh[27].

5

Dewan Bhawani Das murdered Juna Singh, a Rajput chieftain on the mere suspicion of having given shelter to Mian Dido, an intrepid chief whose word was law in the interiors of Jammu and who had terrorized the Sikh garrison stationed in Jammu fort. This had become a cause of great concern for the Durbar. The ghastly murder of Juna Singh infuriated Mian Dido. The alarming situation reached such a boiling climax that either Mian Dido had to be eliminated from the hot bed of Jammu affairs or Ranjit Singh had to retreat to Sialkot.

Ranjit Singh deputed Gulab Singh to arrest Mian Dido alive. "Gulab Singh had personal reasons for eliminating Mian Dido and so he volunteered for this cause. Mian Dido claimed to be a direct descendant of Ranjit Dev and therefore was considered a staunch foe by the Jammu brothers[28]"

Gulab Singh started this mission of crushing the insurrection to be accompanied by Sardar Attar Singh Kallol and Sardar Jagan Nath Singh[29] . But before being shot dead by Gulab Singh's soldiers in the Trikuta Hills of Jammu in 1821 where he had taken shelter, Mian Dido killed Sardar Attar Singh Kallol in the open combat who had cut his aged father, Mian Hazari, into pieces at Jagiti while enquiring about the whereabouts of Mian Dido[30].

In all the campaigns which Ranjit Singh carried on, Gulab Singh played a prominent role. "Gulab Singh got an opportunity to show his mettle only when Maharaja Ranjit Singh fought for the possession of Quila Attack in 1813. He played a major role in protecting the Maharaja's forces in the course of the latter's first unsuccessful campaign for the conquest of Kashmir. Maharaja Ranjit Singh rewarded him with the jagirs of Kharoti

and Babool and appointed Gulab Singh as the Commander of twenty-two horses. Gulab Singh rendered yeoman's service in 1815 when he helped Maharaja Ranjit Singh to reduce Garh Damala Fort in Jullunder Doab and the Maharaja again rewarded Gulab Singh the Jagirs of Lala Chobara and Ramgarh and thus Gulab Singh was allowed to have his own company of two hundred horsemen" [31].

Especially at the siege of Multan in 1819, his dare-devil bravery attracted Ranjit Singh's favourable attention. During the siege of Multan which was conducted under the supervision of Ranjit Singh in person, one of the Sikh Sardars lay dead at the entry of the fort. Under the mammoth and booming cannons to which the besiegers had been subjected, Ranjit Singh commanded his officers to bring back the dead body of his most loved comrade[32]. No one dared out of fear except Gulab Singh who like a flash of lightning rushed forward to the surprise of the whole assembled army and brought back on his horse the dead body of the Sardar[33].

The most difficult expedition which Gulab Singh embarked upon was against Yusuf Zai in 1819 which enabled Ranjit Singh to acquire Peshawar[34].

In 1819, Raja Dhian Singh was promoted to the status of Deorhi Officer or Grand Chamberlain which brought him closer to Ranjit Singh.

During this time, Gulab Singh was entrusted with the job of annexing Rajouri which was ruled by Agar Khan who with his double stratagem had brought disaster on Ranjit Singh in his first campaign against Kashmir in 1813. However, Gulab Singh completed this expedition successfully[35].

6

For his conscientious and loyal services which Gulab Singh rendered for the solidarity, integrity and stability of the Sikh State, he received striking recognition when Maharaja Ranjit Singh personally installed him as the Raja of Jammu on June 16, 1822. Saffron paste of royalty was applied on his forehead in the presence of nobles, jagirdars and close relatives of Gulab Singh at the historic Jeopota tree on the banks of Chenab at Akhnoor Fort.

The fort was built by Mian Taj Singh at the end of the 18th century. Taj Singh was a feudatory of Raja Ranjit Deo.
'Gulab Singh who was only thirty felt proud and excited of his achievement with nothing but a name, a proud ancestry and his own abilities which contributed in getting back his hereditary possession and above all being recognized by Ranjit Singh as the Raja of Jammu'.

A copy of the sanad that Ranjit Singh granted to Gulab Singh on the occasion read :

'On this auspicious occasion with extreme joy and with heart felt love, I grant to Raja Gulab Singh in recognition of his services, the Government of the Chakla of Jammu which from time immemorial has been in the possession of his family. He and his brothers, Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh appeared in my Court at a very early age, loyally and devotedly served me and the State. Their ancestors also served faithfully for a long time under my father Mehan Singh Ji. They have shed their blood freely in many campaigns such as the conquest of Kashmir, the reinduction of Multan, the punishment of the rebels, the suppression of the rebellion on the frontier and the fight with the forces of Kabul. In consideration of these and other services, I grant the Government of the Chakla of Jammu to Raja Gulab Singh and his descendants and I myself mark the forehead of this loyal and devoted servant of mine within the emblem of sovereignty. With great pleasure I also grant Raja Suchet Singh the Government of Ramnagar to be his own as a reward for the great services he has rendered to me. Raja Dhian Singh would be the 'Rulers' Ruler at an appropriate time.

In witness of this I grant this Purwana with my own hands together with a bunch of saffron, 4th Ashad, 1879, Samvat.

The financial status of Mian Kishore Singh a soldier of proven calibre, had improved after his sons were settled at the Sikh State[36]. Dhian Singh was the most influential person in the Lahore Government only next to Aziz-ud-Din and Dinanath. Suchet Singh, the person with most handsome physique, was an accomplished courtier of Ranjit Singh. Of course Gulab Singh was the most powerful grandee of the Lahore State, second to none except the Sikh sovereign himself[37].

7

Immediately after assuming the Rajahship of Jammu, Ranjit Singh sent Gulab Singh to suppress Azam Khan of Tihri on the frontier. The frontier areas were the scene of disturbances and in 1826, Khalifa Saidullah had raised the religious fanaticism. Sardar Budha Singh, the Governor of frontier districts could not handle the worst situation. Gulab Singh was summoned from Jammu to rush towards Tihri without losing any time. He sent his forces under the command of Dewan Amir Chand.

'It was at this campaign that while retreating, the Pathans destroyed the bridge at Attock which made the brisk advance of Sikh forces impossible. Gulab Singh crossed the Indus River and attacked the enemy with three hundred men at his command. Hari Singh Nalwa joined this fray which was at its zenith[38]. The enemy could not make out the power and strength of the attacking forces and retreated back. Gulab Singh's arm was wounded in this expedition[39]. From 1827 onwards till 1837, Gulab Singh was a war strategist of Ranjit Singh and distinguished himself in arduous campaigns which helped Ranjit Singh in extending the boundaries of the Sikh State from the Pamirs to Sind and from Peshawar to Sutlej[40].

By the time Ranjit Singh died in June 1839, Gulab Singh was completely entrenched in in the Sikh Kingdom and had become the most powerful feudatory of the Lahore Durbar. The real powers were predominantly in the hands of Dhian Singh while the State exchequer was controlled by Dina Nath and the foreign affairs were competently handled by Fakir Aziz-ud-Din. Kharrak Singh ascended the Sikh throne after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who had a great fancy for his favourite courtier Chet Singh. The attitude of new incumbents to the prime slot of the Sikh State distanced the leading courtiers of the Durbar. Kharrak Singh indulged in all vices of life and forgot the values of morality much to the chagrin of bigwigs of the Court. Even his son, Prince Nao Nihal Singh, disliked his father's lasciviousness. Chet Singh was responsible for all his addictions. On October 8, 1839, Nao Nihal Singh accompanied by Jamadar Khushal Singh, Raja Dhian Singh, Majeetha Sardar and Gulab Singh forcibly made their entry into the palace when Kharrak Singh was wearing his headgear. He bolted the room from inside when Chet Singh was also present there. Nao

Nihal Singh and Raja Dhian Singh broke open the door in a fit of wrath and killed Chet Singh on the spot. Nao Nihal Singh thus cleared the person of his disliking from the administration. [41]

Kharrak Singh's death on November 5, 1840, coincided with the death of Nao Nihal Singh. As a result a portion of the archway collapsed on him when he was returning to the fort after performing the last rites of his father. Gulab Singh's eldest son, Udham Singh became a victim of this accident when he was riding along with Nao Nihal Singh. This was the first tragic blow to Gulab Singh.

Dr. Honigberger, the personal physician of the late Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who was present at the time of the accident, dismissed the baseless allegation of Cunningham, another historian that the fall of the archway was the result of a conspiracy hatched by Jammu Rajas to eliminate Nao Nihal Singh.

The death of Nao Nihal Singh led to a war of succession among the surviving family members of the late Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Bhai Ram Singh, Khushal Singh and Gulab Singh favoured the candidature of Mai Chand Kour, the widow of Kharrak Singh, to be the Regent of the throne. Sher Singh, son of Ranjit Singh was entrusted the ViceRegency of the Lahore Government.

Raja Dhian Singh distanced himself from all these arrangements at the Sikh Durbar and left for Jammu.

Sher Singh created ripples of anguish when he was declared the sovereign ruler of the Sikh State by winning over the confidence of some army stalwarts and attacked the capital. Gulab Singh's presence in the Lahore fort quashed the plans of Sher Singh when he advised Mai Chand Kour to resist the attack firmly.

Gulab Singh personally with the support of Mansul Singh Sindhu, Attar Singh Sindhanwalla and his nephew, Raja Hira Singh, took over the commands of the forces within the fort in offering tough resistance to Sher Singh's forces.

General Ventura and Raja Suchet Singh supported the cause of Sher Singh in this campaign with unflinching loyalty because both of them had acknowledged Sher Singh as the sovereign ruler of the Sikh State.

Gulab Singh supervised every post and encouraged the forces with rewards and promises and stood fast as the champion of the Sikh Government under Mai Chand Kour.

The attack which was initiated against the Hazuri Bagh gate was repulsed by the Dogra forces stationed behind the gate in which Sher Singh's forces suffered heavy losses. The Hazuri Bagh gate was blown out in this attack. Successive attacks by Sher Singh's army continued constantly for five days but without any gain.

Mai Chand Kour 'was eager that peace be restored in the State on the condition of proper provisions for herself'.

To achieve this settlement, Chand Kour wrote the following letter to Gulab Singh:

'I thank you very much and Raja Hira Singh, Sardar Mansul Singh, Sardar Sultan Mohammad Khan, who helped you in the siege for the devotion and loyalty which you displayed so heroically in holding your own against the usurper. You are now at liberty to put an end to the fight in any manner you like. The Sircar leaves the matter to your discretion. Settle the matter as quickly as possible and receive the Sircar's kindness'[42].

After receiving the letter, Gulab Singh started the negotiations with Sher Singh on the following conditions:

Mai Chand Kour be honoured and given a suitable position;
All the Sardars on her side should be pardoned;
All leading nobles and Gulab Singh himself be taken into favour.

Sher Singh without much hype accepted these conditions in toto and peace was restored in the Sikh State after the truce.

Gulab Singh marched out of the fort after being personally promised by Sher Singh that he would abide by the advice of his advisors according to the provisions of the truce.

In addition, Gulab Singh was offered the position of a Prime Minister by the new regime under Sher Singh. But he refused the offer as he was no more interested to take part in the intrigues of the Lahore Durbar.

‘It is reported when Gulab Singh left Lahore, he carried away the accumulated treasures of Ranjit Singh consisting of sixteen carts filled with rupees and silver coins and 500 horsemen were each given a bag of gold mohurs[43].

8

The campaign organized by the British to annex Kabul in the early forties was shattered by the Afghans. The British forces were repulsed at Jalalabad so the British authorities had established their second defence line at Peshawar. Major (later Sir Henry) Lawrence was deputed to look after the arrangements at Peshawar and “to keep the Sikhs in good humour and to secure from them as much help as possible”[44] when they had been practically driven out of Afghanistan.

Gulab Singh was stationed at Hazara at that time when this disaster engulfed the British forces in Afghanistan in 1841. The Lahore Government reluctantly deputed Gulab Singh to help the British authorities to overcome the crisis. Gulab Singh, gifted with farsighted views in politics[45], exploited this occasion to “secure the firm friendship of the British”.[46] He was himself desperate to help them at this juncture provided it was clearly understood by the British that this obligation was due to him”[47] because he knew that the Sikh authorities were not interested to support the British in their Kabul campaign.

In their second attempt to conquer Kabul, the British forces were repulsed on January 19, 1842, at Khyber Pass because the Nuseeb battalions at the instigation of the Sikhs had raised a revolt against the British. General Pollock was chosen to lead the British forces and was ordered to proceed to

Peshawar. Before the arrival of Gulab Singh at Peshawar, the command of the Sikh army was entrusted to General Mehtab Singh who was hostile to the British. British Commanders pleaded with Gulab Singh to help them in suppressing the revolt against the Nuseeb battalions.

After his arrival at Peshawar, Gulab Singh dissuaded the Sikh forces from taking any active action against the British army. He played diplomacy by suggesting to Khalsa forces and its Commanders "to let the British forces be led to the Khyber pass. If they were defeated by the Afghans, the property and provisions left by them at Peshawar would be theirs. While if they defeated the enemy the Sikhs would claim that it was through their support that the victory was won"[48] The Sikh Commanders appreciated the advice offered by Gulab Singh.

By offering help to the British army, General Pollock entered the Khyber Pass on April 5, 1842 The British Government through their agent, Mr. Clerk, stationed at Lahore sent a congratulatory letter to Gulab Singh on April 8, 1842:

"We heard from our army Commanders how wisely you planned the help of our army and how kindly you rendered this to them"4[9].

He created a favourable position for himself and the basis of friendship between Gulab Singh and Henry Lawrence were thus founded to last longer.

9

With the death of Mai Chand Kour in 1842, the Lahore Government was overshadowed by the clouds of chaos which appeared on its horizon. Sher Singh's strategy was to cut down the authority of Raja Dhian Singh. For this he contrived with Ajit Singh and Lehna Singh Sindhanwalla to eliminate Dhian Singh.

Sher Singh wanted to get rid of Gulab Singh and his brothers in one stroke.

At the wedding of Ranbir Singh in 1843, the entire family of Gulab Singh assembled for the last time at Jammu to celebrate the auspicious occasion which included Dhian Singh, Suchet Singh, Hira Singh and countless loyal dependants of the family.

Gulab Singh was the person who exclusively devoted himself for the cause of his family, raised armies, defeated his foes, conquered new territories and laid the foundation of the Dogra dynasty.

Immediately after the consummation of the marriage ceremony of Ranbir Singh – the heir apparent of Gulab Singh, Sher Singh summoned Dhian Singh to be at Lahore.

Sindhanwalla Sardars double crossed both Sher Singh and Dhian Singh because they wanted to kill two birds with one stone. They both convinced the Maharaja Sher Singh that Dhian Singh was conspiring to kill him and Sher Singh's safety was to eliminate Dhian Singh before he struck his target. Sher Singh believed the contrived story as true and gave a clean chit to Ajit Singh and Lehna Singh to clear Dhian Singh from the Sikh Durbar.

K.M. Panikkar in his book, *Gulab Singh*, page 59, has described the twin murders of Sher Singh and Dhian Singh in this way:

"Ajit Singh Sindhanwalla went straight to Dhian Singh, informed him about the conspiracy hatched by Sher Singh and advised him to strike the deadly blow first. Ajit Singh, who was a bosom friend of Sher Singh, was himself conspiring to kill Sher Singh. Next day at the review of troops, Ajit Singh shot his sovereign friend dead and Lehna Singh killed Pratab Singh, the son of Sher Singh. After the dastardly murder of Sher Singh, Ajit Singh left for Lahore with his three hundred followers. Dhian Singh who was ignorant of the murder of Sher Singh was accosted by Ajit Singh at Badami Bagh and both went to the fort. It was here in the fort that Ajit Singh accused Dhian Singh of treason and shot him dead on September 15, 1843".

Dhian Singh served the Sikh State in the capacity of its Prime Minister for over fifteen years with unfaltering loyalty and maintained the independence of Sikh rule in Punjab and did not let the English agent a make his presence in Lahore to encroach the Sikh authority. Dhian Singh's death was the result

of feuds and anarchy which had engulfed the Sikh Court and Gulab Singh was left behind to mourn the travails.

W.G. Osborne who was the Military Secretary to Lord Auckland, in his book “Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh”; page 75 (London 1840), has described the intelligence of Dhian Singh in these lines:

“Raja Dhian Singh is a noble specimen of the human race; rather above the usual height of the natives with quick and intelligent eyes, high handsome forehead and aquiline features; dressed in a magnificent helmet, he looked a model of manly beauty and intelligence”.

10

At the time of Dhian Singh’s assassination both Raja Suchet Singh and his nephew, Hira Singh, wel-etched in the Lahore Court, tolerated the shock with “unexpected calmness of mind” and they planned to wage a war against the chaotic rule prevailing in the Lahore Court.

From General Avitabile’s house, Hira Singh, pleaded with several nobles to be at his side at this tragic critical juncture. The clarion call for help was promptly acceded by the Sardars who assembled at Budhuka Awa with their troops.

Syed Latif in his book – *History of the Punjab;* page 516, describes the mental status of Hira Singh in these words:

“You know the traitors have killed our sovereign, Sher Singh and his son, and my brave father who loved you as much as he loved me. I now trust your courage, your patriotism and your loyalty to our lamented King. Either uphold me firmly or kill me with this sword as it is better to die with honour than to live in disgrace in the midst of enemies”

The emotional appeal by Hira Singh had an immediate effect on the assembled nobles and they agreed to comply with his tone of action. Hira Singh led his troops against the Sindhanwalla Sardars and Suchet Singh joined him to siege the fort. Ajit Singh and Lehna Singh were killed in the

fight. The head of the slain killer, Ajit Singh, was presented to the wife of Dhian Singh by Hira Singh who simply said, “I am now fully satisfied and I will tell your father that you have performed the duty of a brave son”. After this, Hira Singh was appointed the Prime Minister of Lahore State.

Dhuleep Singh ascended the throne of Punjab State with the active support of Hira Singh and Suchet Singh only when the stormy situation had died down.

Gulab Singh was sounded to lead the affairs of the State by Aziz-ud-Din, the Foreign Minister of the Sikh State because he knew that Gulab Singh had the administrative acumen to restore peace and save the State from the whirlpool of chaos.

Gulab Singh refused the offer that he should be excused from Sikh politics but before leaving for Jammu he left his troops under the command of Dewan Hari Chand in case Hira Singh required their help in any emergency.

The claims of Dhuleep Singh as the Sovereign of the Lahore Government under the Regency of Rani Jindan were shattered by Peshowara Singh and Kashmira Singh, sons of the late Maharaja Ranjit Singh when they refused to acknowledge Dhuleep Singh as the absolute ruler of the Sikh State.

Raja Suchet Singh threw his weight in favour of the young Princes for claiming their share over the throne. Suchet Singh had started feeling jealous of Hira Singh and their festering differences had reached a point of no return.

As a result of the schism between the nephew and the uncle, Suchet Singh raised a rebellion among the disgruntled forces for which active support was pledged by Jawahir Singh. In the nick of time the Sikh regiments who had invited him to rise against the ruler refused to side with Suchet Singh and Jawahir Singh suddenly disappeared from Lahore. So his efforts to support the cause of Peshowara Singh and Kashmira Singh ended unsuccessfully. The following day Suchet Singh was surrounded in his camp by Hira Singh’s troops and he died along with Rai Kesari Singh Kahnachakia and other prominent Dogra soldiers fighting the rebellion

raised by Peshowara Singh and Kashmira Singh, sons of the late Maharaja Ranjit Singh, in March, 1844.

11

Hira Singh now started goading Gulab Singh and asked him to surrender the control of towns and grants held by him and if he failed to concede, Jammu would be attacked. Gulab Singh refused to hand over the control of Suchet Singh's properties on the basis that Suchet Singh was issueless so he had adopted Ranbir Singh as his legal heir. In short, Gulab Singh was the legal inheritor of Suchet Singh's properties.

Gulab Singh of far-sighted vision thought a war between two rival camps would weaken them and hate would spoil their relations. He decided to part with half of Suchet Singh's properties to the Lahore Government. On the insistence of Bhai Ram Singh, Gulab Singh sent his second son, Sohan Singh to the Lahore Durbar when all feuds between the uncle and nephew had ended.

For giving a settled life to Lahore, restoring the order and suppressing the revolt of Peshowara Singh and Kashmira Singh and coercing Gulab Singh to part with Suchet Singh's properties. Hira Singh's popularity became a thorn in the eyes of Rani Jindan and her paramour, Lal Singh.

Rani Jindan turned towards her brother, Jawahar Singh, for help in eliminating Hira Singh who by now had captured overwhelming powers in his hand. Jawahar Singh paraded the Maharaja Dhuleep Singh before the Sikh forces for help to get rid of Hira Singh. The Sikh army hesitated to support the offer as Hira Singh was popular with them.

The reigning authorities of the Lahore Government made another morbid attempt to harass Hira Singh by ordering him to surrender his mentor, Pandit Jalla, in their custody who had terrorized the Sikh nobles of the Court for claiming the money they had embezzled and showing disrespect to Rani Jindan. Sikh nobles considered it as an infringement on their legitimate rights for being loyal to the Court.

Realizing the dangers and refusing to hand over Pandit Jalla, Hira Singh left Lahore on his famous horse, Burchi Bahadur along with Sohan Singh and a limited number of soldiers. They were circled by the Sikh forces under Misr Lal Singh when they had not covered much distance from Lahore. In the hand to hand fight that ensued nephews of Dewan Singh Raipura were all killed. Hira Singh laid down his life fighting for his mentor to the last breath on December 21, 1844. This was the end of Raja Hira Singh who had served the Sikh Durbar with complete dedication and best abilities. He also earned the ire of his uncle, Gulab Singh, in claiming the properties of Raja Suchet Singh for the Sikh State.

Gulab Singh was left behind to mourn the deaths of his two sons, Udham Singh and Sohan Singh, his brothers, Raja Dhian Singh and Raja Suchet Singh, and his nephew, Raja Hira Singh. He had to pay a very heavy price for the unrest and strife which struck the Sikh State after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The Lahore authorities were not content with annihilating Dhian Singh, Suchet Singh and Hira Singh from the strifestricken State but they were now after the hot pursuit of the most powerful person of Jammu, Raja Gulab Singh.

Rani Jindan and her cohorts created waves of anguish for him when they sent Baba Mian Singh and Lala Rattan Chand with the demand that the properties of Hira Singh stand confiscated and the second son of the late Dhian Singh, Mian Jawahir Singh, be handed over to them immediately.

Gulab Singh was unwilling to surrender Mian Jawahir Singh to those ruthless butchers “whose hands were still red with the blood of his family members”.[51]

Gulab Singh sent messages to his army commanders, Dewan Hari Chand, Wazir Lakhpat and others who were stationed differently to mobilize their forces for any eventuality. The Lahore Government had abruptly turned hostile to the Jammu Raja because the Sikh nobles mistrusted his intentions and were adamant to avenge him for his disloyalty to the Lahore Court.

Worthy minds do not stagger in moments of crisis so Gulab Singh did face the volatile position courageously.

Raja Lal Singh, the Prime Minister, annexed some of the Jagirs granted to Gulab Singh by the late ruler of the Sikh Empire. As the war preparations of the Lahore Government enhanced against Jammu, Dewan Hari Chand was instructed by Gulab Singh to supervise the defence of his palace while wazir Ratanu and Jawahir Singh were asked to defend Jammu which had been threatened by Lal Singh. The Lahore authorities ordered the Kashmir Governor to mobilize his troops to Kishtwar to create unrest in that area.

Among those "who stood loyally on his side were Dewan Jawala Sahai, his brother Dewan Hari Chand and Wazir Lakhpat"[52] when Gulab Singh was in the midst of a deep crisis and dangers.

Lal Singh sent his confidante Sardar Fateh Singh to Gulab Singh when he found that Gulab Singh was not an easy target to be tackled comfortably. The negotiations that followed between Sardar Fateh Singh and Gulab Singh, the latter agreed "to obey the mandates provided his territories were respected"[53]

When Fateh Singh being escorted by Wazir Ratanu was being led out of the palace, the over-zealous soldiers of Jawahir Singh positioned in the palace shot him dead. They belonged to the enemy's camp.

Under the Command of Dewan Hari Chand, the Dogra forces gave a bloody nose to the Sikh regiments in the pitched battle fought at Satwari on April 3, 1845 and five guns were captured by Gulab Singh's forces. The Dogra forces were repulsed ar Ramgarh but Devigarh was heroically defended by Dewan Arjan Mal.

The strategy adopted by the Sikh forces left Gulab Singh with the only option of either becoming an ascetic or to open negotiations with the rival camp. It was decided that Lal Singh and Gulab Singh should settle the terms and conditions of compromise but before that Jawahir Singh, the second son of the late Dhian Singh, should be handed over to Sikh commanders.

Before the storm of stiff opposition and simmering rancour of sabre rattling dims, he instructed Dewan Hari Chand to maintain the integrity of Jammu and not to loosen the iron grip over the administration.

Dewan Jawala Sahai played a pivotal role in the crisis. He had been sent to Lahore as an advance party to win the confidence of Sardar Mewa Singh Majeetha's regiments. Gulab Singh also won the confidence of minor and big nobles who swore on the Sikh Holy Book that Gulab Singh would be protected at any cost. Some army commanders got furious over the attitude of Gulab Singh by corrupting the Sikh forces.

Rani Jindan flared up over the news when she came to know the stratagem adopted by Gulab Singh in aligning the Sikh forces with him. She mobilized all the sources at her disposal to imprison him. Mewa Singh Majeetha remained loyal to Jammu Raja and so far there was no danger to his life. But now the situation had climaxed to such a point when General Mewa Singh Majeetha was arrested by the Queen's orders upon his arrival at Lahore. These were defining and accumulated seismic challenges for Gulab Singh. Orders had already been issued by the Queen Jindan to army commanders to incarcerate Gulab Singh on his arrival in the city. Gulab Singh entered Lahore 'half in triumph and half in bondage'[54] as this was the city of his mentor, Ranjit Singh, whom he had served with complete faith and loyalty.

Gulab Singh was confined to a solitary and deserted haveli of the late Nao Nihal Singh. Dewan Jwala Sahai Wazir Zorawar and Dewan Devi Ditta were also arrested and tied down to a gun and were mercilessly lashed but they did not reveal the whereabouts of Raja Gulab Singh's treasures. These were tough moments for Dewan Arjun Mal, who had reached Lahore in disguise to release his master, Gulab Singh. He had to cultivate the manipulative strategy and diplomacy of Chanakya to turn the adverse moments to his master's advantage.

He pleaded with the Lahore authorities that Gulab Singh be given honourable treatment as per his status.[55]

He exercised his diplomacy and outwitted the Sikh Sardars by spreading the news among the Sikh army that bigwigs of the court Rani Jindan, Jawahir

Singh and Lal Singh were planning to annex the hoarded wealth of Gulab Singh and to divide the vast treasures among themselves. By his formidable persuasive powers and shrewd strategy, he created unrest in the Sikh forces. The schism and the rift between the soldiers and the Sikh army commanders reached soaring heights.
When the intentions of the Sikh forces became clear to the Lahore Government, they planned to play another trump card. Jawahir Singh approached the Sikh forces with Dhuleep Singh at the polo ground for succour, Commander Rattan Singh had harangued the soldiers before hand because Dewan Arjan Mal had bribed him with hefty sums of money. The Sikh forces assembled shouted unanimously in one tone that Gulab Singh be released without delay. For the fear of being lynched and to protect the life of Maharaja Dhuleep Singh, Jawahir Singh and Lal Singh without much resistance released Gulab Singh from his captivity and restored his forfeited lands and gave him a new lease of saltmines. Later on he paid a courtesy call to Rani Jindan and Dhuleep Singh at Suman Burj and presented them gifts worth lakhs of rupees. Gulab Singh stayed in Lahore till August 1845, liberally distributed money among the soldiers who had rescued him from the deathtrap laid down by the Lahore administrators. In the meantime, the heir apparent Ranbir Singh and Jawahir Singh, son of the late Dhian Singh, with other commanders claimed the areas which had been occupied by the Sikh army after their invasion of Jammu.

Jawahir Singh, the brother of Rani Jindan, was murdered by his soldiers in September 1845 and the Lahore Durbar was deprived of an administrator to lead the affairs of the State. Gulab Singh was again asked to take over the administration of the Sikh State but he bluntly refused because of the murders of his kith and kin and the unprecedented ignominy and humiliation to which he had been subjected lately. Gulab Singh knew that Rani Jindan and Misr Lal Singh and other leading Sikh nobles of the Lahore Court had no affinity with him. Lal Singh was appointed the Prime Minister of the Sikh State by Rani Jindan much to the chagrin of the Sikh forces.

For the complications which he created with the nexus of Sheikh Imam-ud-Din for the transfer of Kashmir to Raja Gulab Singh, Lal Singh was later on tried by the British charged with sedition and thus was banished from Punjab to lead an obscure life in Dehradun till his death in 1867.

12

After assuming the control of Jammu, Gulab Singh started a vigorous policy of consolidation and expansion. He subdued the neighbouring chieftains and their principalities without shedding blood one after the other and made them a part of his fief. In the period between 1820 and 1827, Gulab Singh brought under his effective control the principalities lying between the Kashmir valley and Jammu. He conquered Reasi, Rajouri and Samarth except Poonch, Jasrota and Ramnagar which were the Jagirs of Dhian Singh, Hira Singh and Suchet Singh respectively[56]. He also subdued most of the petty hill Rajas around Jammu, notably Nihar Singh of Kishtwar, Shamsher Chand of Chenani, Kirchipal of Bhaderwah, Amrit Lal of Basoli which formed a very extensive dominion for a subordinate prince[57]. He took great care and interest in the management of his dominions.

In 1834 Gulab Singh embarked on the most ambitious conquest of Ladakh and took a confidential undertaking from the British for their non-interference in this campaign and sought in some form Maharaja Ranjit Singh's implied consent. "Zorawar Singh was quick in grasping the opportunity in implementing his master's designs in this expedition. He could not march through Kashmir which was then the territory of the Sikhs so Gulab Singh sent Zorawar Singh with the Dogra army through Kishtwar from where the Ladakhi province of Purig, the estate of the "THI" Sultan was invaded. The attempt at the direct conquest of the kingdom was not without great risks and of these, the Dogra Chief was probably aware. But the Dogra General seems to have anticipated these hardships and had made arrangements to take them by the horns. Zorawar Singh chose experienced Dogra soldiers who were far superior to the Ladakhis in armaments as well as in military tactics'[58]. A well equipped force was trained under General Zorawar Singh and General Baj Singh for the first thrust into the Ladakhi border in August 1834. The cream of officers included in this campaign to accompany the force were Mian Rai Singh, Mehta Basti Ram Kishtwaria, Mirza Rasul Baig, Rana Zalim Singh, Sangeman Kotia, Mian Tuta, Sardar Uttam Singh Pidhiar, Wazir Khawja Bunja, Imam Malik, Syed Madin Shah and Sardar Samad Khan.

Zorawar Singh Kahluria, the Dogra General was born in 1786 at village Ansara in Hamirpur district of present Himachal Pradesh[59]. There are veryfew details about his youth and early career. When he was barely sixteen, he killed his cousin over a property feud[60]. He fled to Haridwar to escape punishment and to atone his guilt[61]. Here at Haridwar, he had a chance meeting with Rana Jaswant Singh in 1803 who was a Jagirdar of Galihan (present Ramnagar) and he brought Zorawar Singh to his jagir where his skills in horse-riding and weaponry were perfected. Later on he joined Gulab Singh's army as an adjutant[62].

Zorawar's new employer put him in charge of the defence of Reasi, a job which he performed admirably when it was attacked by Dewan Singh[63]. Soon after that Gulab Singh appointed him the Inspector of Commissariat supplies in all parts, north of Jammu under Dogra control. Here he effected considerable savings for Gulab Singh; the practical results achieved by Zorawar Singh impressed him with his innate ability, loyalty and thus earned him quick promotions[63]. About 1823, he was elevated to the status of Governor of Reasi, Arnas, Kishtwar and Kussal and he was awarded the title of wazir for his selfless services[64]. As an organizing genius, Wazir Zorawar Singh devoted the next two decades of his service in extending and consolidating the boundaries of Gulab Singh. He not only conquered Ladakh, Baltistan but overran western Tibet[65].

His force marching through Kishtwar covering a long distance on foot and on horseback, entered the Ladakhi province of Purig. About five thousand Ladakhis made an unsuccessful attempt to stop the Dogra advance on August 16, 1834 at Sankhu but they were mauled and Kartse fell to the control of Dogra General Zorawar Singh[66].

From Kartse the invading force under the command of General Zorawar Singh marched down to Suru River and in the plains of Pashkyum, a pitched battle was fought which again resulted in the defeat of the Ladakhis. They rejected the offer of negotiations to which Zorawar Singh wanted to enter as the winter was approaching fast. The Ladakhis had their own calculations of driving out Dogra General's force from their soil, refused to reach any agreement and adopted the tactics of guerilla warfare[67]. In the meantime, Ladakhis started to collect an army with which to fight the

valiant Dogra force. When their preparations for a stiff fight were over, the winter had lost its bitterness and they marched up to Lang Karste where the Dogra force had stationed them. After observing the enemies for a few days, Zorawar Singh attacked with a great thrust. No serious efforts were employed by the Ladakhis to restrict the attack and they retreated to Leh.

Tsepal had no stomach to face the Dogra army as he agreed to negotiate. A meeting was arranged between the two parties, i.e. Zorawar Singh and the King at Bazgo. Consequent to the agreement reached between the two, Zorawar Singh installed Tsepal as a ruler of Leh and he agreed to pay an annual tribute of rupees twenty thousand and a war indemnity of rupees fifty thousand[68].

The Sikhs became jealous of Gulab Singh's rapidly growing power and Mihan Singh, the Governor of Kashmir, instigated and provoked the Ladakhis for retaliation. They rose in revolt and besieged the Dogra garrison at Suru[69]. The winter had set in and the intense snow had closed the passes. But Zorawar Singh was not the person who could wait for the winter to recede. To the utter amazement of his enemy, his force marched to Leh. Gyalpo expressed remorse at what had happened but Zorawar Singh inflicted exemplary punishments on the rebels[70]. He appointed Dewan Daya Ram as the agent at the fort and placed a sufficient army at his disposal[71].

The following year Ngroub Stanzan engineered a rebellion at the instigation of the Kashmir Sikh Governor again. Zorawar Singh deposed him and reinstated Tsepal at an increased tribute. Zorawar Singh conquered these areas repeatedly but they remained perennially the hot bed of rebellions as these people were temperamentally prone to. They would rise in revolt at the strike of a match-box.

By the end of 1840, the Ladakhis had found a leader in a man called Sukamir who rose in revolt against the Dogra force. But Zorawar Singh caught him before his rebellion matured and he was publicly executed which created a wave of terror in the minds of the Ladakhis.

After completing his arduous campaigns of Ladakh, Zorawar Singh turned his attention towards Baltistan and organized a Ladakhi force under

Ladakhi commanders to invade Baltistan. The Baltistan army did not resist the thrust of the Dogra General and the fort of Askardu was captured without much resistance by the enemy. Mohammad Shah, the son of the chief of Baltistan was appointed its Sultan[72]. In this expedition the Ladakhis, notably Tsepal played a positive role who had never before fought even to save his own kingdom[73].

Zorawar Singh was not a person to be easily satisfied by these conquests. He undertook the last and final arduous campaign in the inhospitable terrains which turned out to be a fatal and disastrous one for him[74].

During the long history of India, no Indian ruler had thought of conquering Tibet and no Indian General accustomed to the heat of the plains, had ever dared to face the severity of the Tibetan climate[75]. Zorawar Singh nourished the thought of this uphill task to conquer the Central Tibetan province for his esteemed master, Gulab Singh[76].

In May 1841, Zorawar Singh's troops marched upto the Indus, captured Rudok and Garo and further advanced into the district of Mansarawar without much retaliation. The Ladakhis and Baltis formed a part of his five thousand soldiers controlled and trained by the Dogra commanders and they were stationed at Tirthapuri while Colonel Basti Ram camped at Takla Gor on the Nepal border[77]. Zorawar Singh's calculations proved untrue as he had not anticipated any serious offence by the Tibetans during the intense cold which could only be tolerated by people covered with sheep skins and surrounded by fire[78]. It was here at Tirthapuri in November 1841 that he came to know that a Lhasa force was approaching towards them. A small detachment proceeded to meet the enemy force but crumbled under the fiery attack of the Tibetans. A second detachment was sent under the command of Ghulam Khan but met with no better fate[79]. Zorawar Singh now realized the impending danger because he was facing enemy force which was more than twice the strength which he had under his command. Retreat through the dense snows and biting cold was impossible for him. The only alternative left before him was the Napoleonic maxim that offence was the best form of defence[80]. A pitched battle was fought with the Tibetan force which lasted for three days from December 10 to December 12, 1841[81]. A bullet hit Zorawar Singh and finally a Tibetan soldier pierced

him through the breast with his lance. “This battle proved disastrous for Zorawar Singh and his death was a grave blow to Gulab Singh and there was rebellion by people aided and abetted by advancing Tibetan forces. Gulab Singh was informed by Major Henry Lawrence about this debacle when he camped at Pheshowar as deputed by the Sikh State to help the British to invade the Afghans. A belief is rife among the people that in the last campaign, Zorawar Singh was not accompanied by his wife who always protected her husband from evil effects. Contingents of army were dispatched from Jammu under the command of Dewan Hari Chand which suppressed the revolt and threw back the Tibetan army. The Tibetan government approached for peace. A peace treaty was signed by Dewan Hari Chand and Wazir Punnu on behalf of Gulab Singh and Kalon Surkhan and Depon Pishy on behalf of the Dalai Lama in September 1842. By this treaty the traditional boundary between Ladakh and Tibet was reorganized by both sides. Areas around Minsar and Mansarovar Lake were retained by the Government of Jammu”

[82].

No Indian ruler in the past not even Samudragupta or any Mughal Emperor had even attempted to invade Tibet but General Zorawar Singh embarked on this most difficult expedition of his life and routed the Tibet army and thus extended the borders of India to the other side of the Himalayas.

Panikkar has summed up the achievements of Zorawar Singh in his book *Gulab Singh, the Founder of Kashmir,* page 82 in these words:

‘Thus died Zorawar Singh, the finest soldier that India produced in the 19th Century. Besides being an intrepid Commander as the Ladakh and Baltistan campaigns had shown him to be, he was also gifted with considerable political ability. To have marched over the snow-clad ranges, fifteen thousand feet above sea-level, where the air is so rare that the people from the plains can hardly breathe in comfort, is a wonderful achievement.

He conquered Baltistan and Western Tibet and added to the geographical boundaries of India which no one in the past had ever dared. It was a great exploit for which there was no parallel in the annals of Indian history. His

greatness would shine in the pages of Indian history as that of a great and noble soldier'.

13

After assuming the rulership of the State, the affairs of the administration required the calibre of Gulab Singh's statesmanly qualities to set them in proper shape which had been sadly neglected by the Sikh Governor. Gulab Singh provided relief and settled existence to the people of Kashmir[83] who were passing through a most turbulent phase in their own land. The last Sikh Governor, Sheikh Imam-ud-Din's rule in Kashmir was an economic strangulation, a political humiliation and a religious persecution of the Kashmiris[84]. Chaos, internal strife, a regime of oppression and suppression prevailed till the advent of Gulab Singh's rule in Kashmir.

After the exit of Imam-ud-Din, the sovereignty of Kashmir passed onto Gulab Singh and he triumphantly marched into Kashmir on November 9, 1846 with his forces and subordinates[85].

"Maharaja Gulab Singh created Jammu & Kashmir State which included the territories already in his possession to which were added Kashmir and a part of Chambal State.

A few months later, Gulab Singh gave up Hazara Province to Lahore in exchange for Bhimber and the strip of plain territory lying between Ranbir Singh Pura and Suchetgarh. Gulab Singh also exchanged Chambal territory lying to the west of Ravi with Lakhanpur. The southern boundary was finally demarcated by Captain James Abbot in consultation with Dewan Jawala Sahai. This was concluded before the close of 1847, and Jammu and Kashmir State took its final shape. Thus the tradition of royalty connected with it which Maharaja Ranbir Singh inherited"[86].

The socio-economic conditions of Kashmiris were highly deplorable when he took over the control of Kashmir. He inherited a terrible legacy with a faltering economy from the previous Sikh ruler. The shawl industry which was the main profession of the Kashmiris was weighed down by heavy and capricious taxes. In July 1847, Gulab Singh promulgated a new system of

control for the shawl industry. By this law which chained the workers for the same master was abolished and thus the workmen became free. The minimum salary was fixed at four annas for the workers. The regularization and reorganization of the shawl industry was a great administrative achievement[87].

The reckless Sikh Governor had given away much of the land as rent free concession, an oppressive system of beggars or forced labour had made the life of the peasantry miserable; Sati and infanticide were common and the hilly areas were infested with robbers[88].

The government took two-thirds to three quarters of the gross produce of the land and the whole system of assessment was exceedingly complicated which only suited to the interest of corrupt officials[89]. He stamped out the crime rate which had swollen to new fearful heights during the Sikh rule. As an astute administrator, he mitigated the scars of repressive rule left by the previous regime. Gulab Singh suppressed the internal strife and instability prevailing in Kashmir and established order and peace.

He regularized the jagirs which the Sikh Governors, Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din and Sheikh Imam-ud-Din especially the latter, had lavished on their supporters for political reasons[90]. Gulab Singh slapped stringent measures to control and to regularize the ‘Shali system’ which was the monopoly of the moneylenders. After the harvest of rice crop supplies from the field were directly dispatched to the godowns of these unscrupulous sharks[91]. Gulab Singh divided Kashmir into four zones by appointing four collectors: Amar Singh, Wazir Punnu, Arjan Mal and Pt. Rajkak, to achieve the target of regularizing the rationing system[92]. Thus he broke the backbone of these shaukars (money lenders) who quite often indulged in fraudulent methods and black marketing during the famines which frequented the valley[93].

Gulab Singh established the finance department under the aegis of Ganesha Bhalwal to control the finances of the State similar to the one established by the Mughal Emperors[94].

Gulab Singh used to hold durbars in Jammu and Kashmir as per his availability to keep in close touch with the problems of his people. He was

always ready to hear the grievances, complaints and petitions of the aggrieved people and to decide the matters which were later implemented. Drew in his book *Jammoo and Kashmir Territories* has described Gulab Singh's system of dispensing justice in these words.

'He was always accessible, patient and ready to listen to complaints. He was much given to looking into details so that the smallest thing might be brought before him and have his consideration. With the customary offering of a rupee as Nazar, anyone could get his ear; even in a crowd one could catch his eye by holding up a rupee and crying out, 'Maharaj, Arz Hai', that is 'Maharaja, a petition'. He would pounce down like a hawk on the money and having appropriated it would hear out the petitioner. Once a man, after this fashion making a complaint, when the Maharaja was taking the rupee, closed his hand and said, No, first hear what I have to say. Even this did not go beyond Gulab Singh's patience; he waited till the fellow had told his tale and opened his hand, then taking the money, he gave orders about the case.

The training and efficiency of his forces were always uppermost in his mind and he devoted his attention to these matters after he had firmly settled on the throne of Jammu and Kashmir State. "Foundries and arsenals were established in the State; the forts were repaired and garrisoned and a code of military instructions and orders were drawn. He coined new words of command in Sanskrit instead of copying the English words. The names of his regiments were also taken from the Hindu epics and their heroes. Thus there were the Gobardhan Regiment, Raghunath Regiment and Lachhman Regiment. The military efficiency of his forces was recognized and the difficult campaign undertaken by his General Zorawar Singh had stood the test of time more than once'

95.

14

Maharaja Gulab Singh had personal and cordial relations with the British officials but his diplomatic relations with them were not friendly. "In 1848, Lord Hardinge communicated to Maharaja Bahadur mentioning that the nature of his internal administration aroused misgivings in the mind of the

British Government and claimed their right to interfere in his affairs. The purpose of this communication was to get a Resident appointed in his Durbar "[96]. Maharaja responded that a promise had been given that no Resident would be stationed in his State as there was no provision provided in the Amritsar Treaty of 1846.

Jammu and Kashmir State occupied a unique geo-political position in the Indian subcontinent. Its boundaries were contiguous with Afghanistan, Sinkiang and western Tibet. The southern Russian states were its close neighbours in the northwest. The designs of the Russians and Chinese expanding their regimes continued to worry the British strategists and added fear to their calculations[97].

So long as the British remained preoccupied with the crisis in Punjab, they left Gulab Singh to himself. After the final subjugation of the Sikh State and their territories, they lost no time in squeezing and in extending effective control over Gulab Singh[98]. Three years had not elapsed when the British realized the heinous blunder of ceding to Gulab Singh and his male heirs in independent and permanent possession 'of all the hilly and mountainous tracts with its dependencies situated to the eastward of the river Indus and westward of river Ravi'[99] which also included the strategic area of Gilgit. The British wanted to regain the control of this territory at any cost. They hatched plot after plot and pressurized Maharaja Gulab Singh and his successors to regain the possession of these areas[100].

In spite of initiating potential relief measures and putting the economy of the State on fast track, the British authorities complained about the reports of oppression and mismanagement in the affairs of the State. They deputed one of their experienced officers, Henry Lawrence to make a detailed report about the maladministration in the State. Lawrence submitted the report and it was found that allegations levelled against the administration and the Maharaja were untrue and exaggerated[101]. The Governor General warned the Maharaja that the Indian government would not hesitate in interfering in the administration in case he failed to take effective steps to reorganize the affairs of the State[102].

Sir John Lawrence sent a letter to Dewan Jwala Sahai, dated January 14, 1852, about the appointment of a political supervisor in the valley. He writes: “On account of certain excesses committed by some European visitors in the past year, I intend to appoint some responsible European official at Srinagar to stay there till the return of the said visitors in order that he may put a stop to the occurrence of such excesses, as the Maharaja is well acquainted with the good intentions and sociability of Major Macgregor, I wish he may be allowed to stay at Srinagar till the end of hot season to supervise the conduct of European visitors to Kashmir. As this arrangement is also for the benefit of His Highness, it is hoped it will be gladly accepted by His Highness”.

Gulab Singh was left with no alternative but to agree to this new arrangement which he had stubbornly refused in 1848 by strongly protesting against the appointment of a political officer because it was against the degree of independence granted to his State[103].

Major Macgregor was the first officer on special duty in Kashmir but he enjoyed no power of political importance and he could not stay in Kashmir for more than six months only during the summer season[104].

Like a sagacious and a ruler of far-sighted vision he wanted to see his only surviving son, Ranbir Singh, to hold the successful charge of his patrimony in his own life time[105]. He had many reasons to be worried about because the British had become aggressive thus causing embarrassment to Gulab Singh. He was a disillusioned man because he was apprehensive of Dalhousie’s manoeuvres who would ‘one day invoke the notorious doctrine of lapse and take the State over under British administrators’[106]. His nephews, Jawahir Singh and Moti Singh, sons of the late Dhian Singh, had claimed their right to share the territories and the private common property of all the brothers. In addition to these, Gulab Singh suffered from dropsy and he had requested Dr. Hornigberger to join him as his physician in Srinagar which he politely refused. The disease became worse with time and in 1856, his health deteriorated further. As a result, Gulab Singh decided to entrust the administration of the State to his only surviving son and to retire quietly from the affairs of the State.

After his father's death in 1836, Jwala Sahai was Gulab Singh's plenipotentiary in the negotiations of all confidential matters[107]. So Gulab Singh deputed Dewan Jwala Sahai, his most trusted confidante, to convey to the Governor General the enthronement of his only son.

The British Governor General in India confirmed Ranbir Singh as his successor to the throne of Jammu and Kashmir State. Thus Gulab Singh cleared all the cobwebs and complications before he finally retired to lead a quiet life at Srinagar. Gulab Singh himself applied the saffron paste of royalty on Ranbir Singh's forehead at Thakurdwar and the royal procession moved to Purani Mandi Tilak Bhawan where Ranbir Singh sat on the royal throne. Mr. Angels and other British Military officials from Sialkot cantonment and his Rajput relatives applied saffron tilak on his forehead[108].

Thus Maharaja Gulab Singh installed his only surviving son on the throne of Jammu and Kashmir State on February 20, 1856 with great pomp and show[109]. He lived a subject citizen of Ranbir Singh but for all practical purposes, he continued to be the real sovereign of the State till his death on August 4, 1858[110]. It was a rare example in Indian history rather than in the world history that a ruler had abdicated his royal powers during his lifetime.

15

Gulab Singh was one among the great grand personalities that India produced in the last decade of the 18th century. Maharaja Scindia and Haider Ali rose from obscurity and formed their own states in the 18th century but Gulab Singh's case was entirely different who by starting his early career as a trooper in Ranjit Singh's force, formed his own state by his shrewd diplomacy and established himself as a sovereign ruler of Jammu and Kashmir State. He was the only ruler in Indian history who extended the geographical boundaries of India.

Gulab Singh was not a simple person but where his interests clashed, he would not hesitate to strike back with full force which in life would be considered a lack of morality. He was trained in hypocritical and throat cutting circumstances where intrigue, conspiracy and treachery were

considered part and parcel of life. He was willing to yield with grace when there was no other alternative left open to negotiate and only to part with money that would serve his purpose. As a skilful commander and an efficient soldier, he knew that war was only the arm of policy and he would not embark on conflict unless he was confident of his success[111].

He had tremendous confidence in his diplomatic skills and he depended mostly on his astute statesmanship to execute his plans successfully. 'He should be judged in relation to the morality of his age and to the necessities of his own position. If these allowances are taken into consideration, Gulab Singh was an able and moderate man, who did little in idle or wanton spirit and who was not without some traits both of good humour and of generosity of temper'[112].
Sir Henry Lawrence who knew Gulab Singh personally formed the following impartial opinion about Gulab Singh: 'I have no doubt that Maharaja Gulab Singh is a man of indifferent character, but if we look for perfection from native chiefs, we shall look in vain. He has many virtues that few of them possess-viz, courage, energy and personal purity. The way in which he has been doubted, denounced and vilified in anonymous journals is very disgraceful to us'[113].

Gulab Singh infused loyalty and confidence in people like Dewan Amir Chand, Zorawar Singh and Dewan Jwala Sahai who remained dedicated and devoted to him till his death. The Sikh State inflicted human losses on Gulab Singh but he remained loyal at heart to the Lahore Durbar[114]. His method of dispensing justice was fast, spontaneous and expeditious. He was ruthless in his punishments to corrupt officers which created a terror for the administrative machinery so that they should avoid such tentacles.

On the whole, Gulab Singh led a pure life but he did not spend great amounts on palaces, temples and on other magnificent buildings and left no monuments worthy of his name. "He was not able to sign his name because of his scant education but looked after his own accounts and often had the grains for his horse weighed out before him. Gulab Singh was an unlettered man but he was bold and energetic, a wise and prudent army commander. He was anything but strong headed and hotblooded prudently making slow but resolute and judicious movements; thinking more of his resources and

reserves than most of his country men were used to do. He was quick in availing of opportunities, fond of the defensive though ready to take the offensive when opportunity needed, always considering arms or conflict as his last resort"[115]. He always held his own ground in the political field against the foxy diplomats of the British government which proved that as an historic figure, he dominated the central stage of contemporary events and thus Gulab Singh had few equals in his time[116]. The most powerful Sikh Empire of Ranjit Singh contained many nobles and remarkable men assembled in his court, the valiant Hari Singh Nalwa; Dina Nath; Aziz-ud-Din, the suave and polished Foreign Minister; Jamadar Khushal Singh, the Lord Chamberlain and Attar Singh Sindhanwala, head of a powerful clan and himself a noble, courageous and chivalrous warrior, all of them acknowledged Gulab Singh as their superior in statecraft, prudence and worldly wise wisdom[117].

The Sikh Sardars like the Sindhanwalla and Attari chieftains though they did not trust him but recognized his loyalty to Ranjit Singh[118]. 'Gulab Singh who in his youth dreamed of carving out a State ultimately won for him a throne of his own. In a century bereft of historical achievements in Indian history, Gulab Singh stands out as a solitary personality of political eminence and Jammu and Kashmir is his monumental achievement'[119].

Maharaja Gulab Singh breathed his last on August 4, 1858 at Srinagar.

"The confidential dispatches of Mirza Saifud-Din, son of Mirza Abad Beg, written from Srinagar between 1846 and 1859 to the British authorities at Lahore provided one of the most important sources for the early history of the Dogra rule in Kashmir. His father Mirza Abad Beg, was planted as British informer in the Kashmir Durbar in the 1830s through the efforts of a traveller Godfrey Thomas Vigne and after his death, Henry Lawrence retained his services to perform the same job to provide extensive eye witness accounts of the Dogra rule. Saifud-din was not an official chronicler but had been planted to acquaint them with the true state of affairs at Gulab Singh's court. When Gulab Singh became aware of Saif-ud-Din's activities soon after he became Maharaja of the State, he asked his Prime Minister, Jwala Sahai, to get this imprudent man dismissed from British service by any possible means"[120].

Saif-ud-din has given a pictorial account of the funeral ceremonies of Gulab Singh's death:

'At last the Maharaja's remains were laid upon the bier and with all stately honours carried towards Ram Bagh mounted on an elephant, showered coins, gold and silver over the bier of the Maharaja Sahib. The bier was preceded by the bands and standard bearers of all the regiments. The bands played the funeral march theme. Ornately decorated elephants also accompanied the funeral procession. At about three in the afternoon the procession reached Ram Bagh from Sher Garhi and the Maharaja's remains were laid down upon a huge royal pyre made of fuel, almonds and raisins. Around the body was placed a few maunds of sandalwood. Then Mian Pratap Singh (Ranbir' Singh's son) put a flame to the pyre and it was reduced to ashes. Afterwards thousands of people including the members of the royal family, civilians and army officials, soldiers, servants and subjects of the Maharaja except for Brahmins, Muslims and Sikhs shaved their heads'[121].

This was the end of Gulab Singh who dominated the Dogra rule from June 16, 1822 to August 4, 1858.

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MAHARAJA RANBIR SINGH (1830 - 1885) 1

Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1830-1885) after being installed as the ruler on the throne of Jammu & Kashmir State on February 20, 1856 did not change the basic structure of the personal rule which his father, Maharaja Gulab Singh, had adopted in running the administration and gave positive dimensions to his rule[1]. He inherited a government which was disorganized and its economy was in shambles and limping[2]. He wanted to breathe prosperity, peace and to usher an era of reforms for his subjects. As he took over the centre stage of administration, he vigorously crafted policies and potential innovative measures to launch his rule because he wanted to bring out the State from the shackles of poverty and exploitation.

Maharaja Gulab Singh was eager to install Ranbir Singh on the throne of the State during his lifetime because by 1856, his health had worsened. Confirmation for Ranbir Singh's ascendancy to the throne was required by the British rulers in India. Gulab Singh's friendly and diplomatic relations, his influence and status with the British officialdom weighed in his favour[3]. At twenty six Ranbir Singh had sufficient experience and rigorous training under his father to assume the onerous responsibility as a ruler of the largest Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir[4]. He was inspired by the youthful ambitious and impassioned zeal to uplift the socio-economic status of the State[5].

Ranbir Singh's administration was required to remove the scars of many centuries of maladministration, mismanagement and harsh rule of the Afghans and the Sikhs under whom the conditions of the local inhabitants had deteriorated. Cultivation had suffered, there were almost prohibitive duties levied on all the goods imported or exported from the State and the justice had become a commercial commodity[6]. He completely overhauled the administrative machinery, made an attempt to demarcate the various

functions of the administration and established several separate departments for the army; foreign relations; home affairs; civil departments besides religious endowments[7]. He was desirous of an overnight change for the betterment of his subjects as he felt himself responsible to God for the care of his people[8].

Gulab Singh married early in life in 1809 into a Rukwal Rajput family and by his Rani, he had three sons, Udham Singh, Sohan Singh and Ranbir Singh. Udham Singh died along with Nao Nihal Singh when they passed under the gateway which gave access to the first slab of stone and masonry crashed down on their heads[9]. Sohan Singh was killed along with Hira Singh and Pandit Jalla on December 21, 1844, when they were forced to flee Lahore and had been declared rebels by the Sikh Government[10]. Pandit Jalla, the advisor and mentor of Hira Singh, the Prime Minister of the Sikh State from September 1843 to December 1844, had become a victim of court intrigue because in the capacity of Audit and Accounts officer, he had booked several top ranking officials for mulcating state funds. All the aggrieved persons joined together against Pandit Jalla and waited for the right opportunity to strike him[11].

Ranbir Singh was the third youngest and the only surviving son of Gulab Singh who was entrusted the mantle of rulership of the state. He was married to the daughter of Raja Bijai Singh of Siba in Kangra in June 1843. Raja Suchet Singh was issueless so he had adopted Ranbir Singh and he spent his boyhood mostly in Ramnagar which was the jagir of Suchet Singh[12]. Suchet Singh was strikingly handsome, an accomplished courtier and surveyor of petitions of Lahore court as well as a popular military commander. From his godfather. Suchet Singh, he imbibed a decent temperament and a love for the cultural values of life[13].

The year that followed after Ranbir Singh’s ascendancy to the prime slot was an extremenly turbulent period in Indian history. The sepoys of Meerut murdered their white-skinned officers on the May 10, 1857 and they proceeded towards Delhi to proclaim Bahadur Shah as the Emperor of Hindustan[14]. The beleaguered Mughal ruler, Bahadur Shah Zafar was the patron of the first war of independence who had to bear the brunt of the abortive attempt in which his sons were murdered in broad daylight.

Bahadur Shah was deported to Rangoon where he died in utter desolation. Pandit Nehru in *'Discovery of India'* writes about the first war of freedom 'as the combined battle which was essentially a feudal outburst against the British rule in India, headed by the feudal chiefs, aided by the wide spread anti-foreign sentiments. It was much more than a military mutiny which spread rapidly and assumed the character of a popular war of independence. The main characters of this uprising were Bahadur Shah, General Bakht Khan, Imams of Lucknow, NanaSahib and Lakshmibai, Rani of Jhansi under whose command, both Hindu and Muslim soldiers fought unitedly and they paid no significance to communal colour for a common cause. The rebellion in the army and defiance of State authority by the common masses were acts of political choice". But this uprising against the oppressive rule of the British failed for lack of mass support, disunity and communication gaps between the different groups of freedom mongerers. This revolt served as an initial jolt to the British rulers in India because in the ensuing years the struggle for India's freedom was going to snowball into an unprecedented movement to throw them out of the country.

Governor General Lawrence asked Maharaja Gulab Singh for help in order to suppress the combined outburst against the British regime. Being Maharja Gulab Singh's last public engagement who was virtually on his death bed, placed all the resources of the State at their disposal being a tributary State. Four battalions, Dhani, Narain, Brij Raj and Goverdhan together with artillery under the command of Dewan Hari Chand were dispatched to Delhi[15]. The contingent dispatched consisted of nearly three thousand men including two thousand of infantry, two hundred of cavalry with guns[16] under the overall command of Ranbir Singh.

Even the Queen commended the friendly help which was made available at a place far away from the State. It was conveyed through Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State for India[17]. "In 1858, Lord Canning bestowed on the Maharaja Ranbir Singh the title of C.O.S.I, in an investiture Durbar held at Lahore for his selfless service and loyalty to the Queen and Her Indian Government. Ranbir Singh politely refused the Khirata, a lakh of rupees and a piece of land in Avadh as a gift.

‘The Viceroy of India gave to Ranbir Sigh Sanad, wide dated March 9, 1860, the right of adopting a son on failure of having a male heir to succeed him and a document which reiterated the privilege of his lineage to rule in Jammu and Kashmir’[18].

But during this turbulent period, the State remained comparatively tranquil and the Maharaja engaged himself for an almost all round improvement in the administration with the active support and cooperation of his seasoned Prime Minister, Dewan Jwala Sahai and Dewan Kripa Ram[19].

2

There were social and economic challenges confronting the State which engaged Ranbir Singh’s attention. The issues faced by his subjects had to be tackled with innovative measures and diplomatic strategy. During General Zorawar Singh’s war campaigns about one hundred and six soldiers of his army had been made captives in Lhasa in December 1841[20]. The Maharja repatriated them from Lhasa through the good offices of the British resident in Nepal in 1857. Fifty-six of them opted to return Jammu and they were honourably settled with jagirs[21].

There were murder attempts on the life of Maharja Ranbir Singh during the early years of his rule hatched by his close relatives in nexus with the disgruntled conspirators. Jawahir Singh, a cousin and son of Dhyan Singh joined hands with Mian Hathu, the Governor of Rajouri, to eliminate Ranbir Singh while he was on a hunting spree below the dense forests of Gumat[22]. Subedar Gulabu Langeh, one of the conspirators, shot him when he was sitting on a raised platform especially erected for hunting purposes. However, this shot missed the target and the Maharaja escaped unhurt[23]. But the search for the killers started. It was through the efforts of Ganesha Bhalwal along with Sheikh Saudagar that the whole conspiracy was exposed when prominent rebels – Ganjan Deva and Mallu Salathia of Chogan Salathia of Jammu; Mohru Thakkar; Udey Singh Bandral; Jawahar Manhas; Nar Singh Das Raina and Jittu Gajodia were holding a secret meeting to kill the Maharaja in their next attempt[24]. All those involved in this conspiracy were caught red handed and tried and their punishments

were decided on February 10, 1860 by the Maharaja himself except Jawahir Singh who was let off without a trial[25]. Subedar Gulabu Langeh and Shadi Khan Chib, formerly a commanding officer of the Maharaja's force, were publicly hanged to death at Akhnoor and Bishnah respectively[26]. Mian Hathu, a son of Gulab Singh by his concubine, an avowed enemy of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, played a prominent role in the conspiracy against the life of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. For his crime he was imprisoned in the Gajpat Fort for the rest of his life, while the properties of all the accused were confiscated. The others found guilty were kept in the forts at Pogal, Gajpat and Salal. The AngloIndian press as usual derived far fetched conclusions[27]. Maharaja Ranbir Singh remorselessly inflicted the most sadistic punishments on his opponents and application of torture as an instrument, mercifully decreased in the later part of his life[28].

3

After the arrival of State forces which had been dispatched to help the British for suppressing the rebellion of 1857, an expedition force was especially raised and trained under the command of Colonel Devi Singh Narania, Colonel Bijai Singh and General Hoshiara Singh to annex the north-east tribal areas because Maharaja Gulab Singh was unable to subjugate Gilgit and other tribal areas during his lifetime. There was a rebellion in Gilgit and the tribal Rajas of Yasin, Hunza and Nagar gave a deadly blow and inflicted heavy casualties on Dogra forces and only a Gorkha woman survived who swam across the Indus to tell the gory tale of this disaster[28A]. This hostility and revolt raised by them was a discredit to the reputation of Gulab Singh as a soldier who was in failing health. Maharaja Gulab Singh laid the foundation of a stable administration in the provinces of Jammu and Kashmir, but the credit of reconquering Gilgit and the subjugation of Hunza and Nagar, Ponial and Yasin went to Maharaja Ranbir Singh. He organized regular campaigns to which almost every Dogra family contributed a soldier in 1860. Under the command of Colonel Devi Singh Dogra troops inflicted a crushing defeat on the recalcitrant Rajas of the frontier areas and avenged the earlier Dogra defeat[28B]. The force under the command of Col. Bijai Singh and Hoshiara Singh crossed the Sindh River from Punji and made a brisk advance towards Gilgit.

Before this force could reach its target to capture it, the ruler of Gilgit, Gaur Aman, died. The demoralized small force of the deceased ruler was not a match for the Dogra force. The Dogras captured Gilgit with little resistance from the enemy.

No longer content with this victory over Gilgit, Colonel Devi Singh marched head towards Yasin. The Dogra troops besieged the Mandori fort of Yasin and Maharaja Ranbir Singh celebrated this vitory over Yasin and awards were distributed among his officers.

In 1866 another campaign was launched against Hunza under the overall command of Colonel Bijai Singh. Forces of Yasin, Chitral, Darel, Hunza and Nagar formed a united front against the onslaught of Dogra forces. The Maharaja's forces crossed the Sindh River at Bunji but before the offensive was to be struck, the united front collapsed. Aman Malik fled with his troops towards Chitral and his allies also ran away from the battle front and Ponial was captured with little resistance. Subsequently the Dogra forces besieged Darel and the head of Darel accepted the Maharaja's supremacy and agreed to pay him a tribute. In 1870, Mir Wali, Raja of Yasin murdered Lt. Howard. His dead body was brought to Gilgit and buried there which led to the downfall of Yasin and later on was made a part of the State.

It had become a practice with the tribals of the Frontier areas as the Maharaja's forces advanced ahead or retreated due to biting cold, they would rise in revolt and thus they had to be repeatedly subdued.

4

Temperamentally the tribal people of Gilgit were aggressive and restive in 1880, they again rose against the administrator of Gilgit, Lala Ram Kishan for the irregular supplies of food stocks. They joined hands with the local inhabitants of Darel and Yasin for an attack on Gilgit. He captured a portion of Ponial and before he could advance towards Gilgit, the force dispatched under the command of General Hoshiara Singh repulsed his designs capturing Gilgit. General Hoshiara Singh was a terror in these areas because people used to hold their breath at the were mention of Hoshiara Singh. He fell sick in Gilgit and died there[29]. Complete domination was established by

the Dogra Commanders over Chilas, Ponial, Yasin, Darel, Hunza and Nagar during his reign. Maharaja Ranbir Singh took full advantage of the political complicity of the government in adding more frontier areas to his State which showed his thorough grasp over his diplomatic strategy[30]. The British Government was not averse to the influence which Ranbir Singh commanded over the Gilgit region. Besides, in order to remain informed of the latest moves of Russia across the Pamirs, the British appointed Captain Buddulph, an officer on special duty at Gilgit. The Gilgit agency assumed great significance on account of its strategic importance. Beyond the Agency on the west was Chitral and on its north met the three subcontinents of Russia, India, China and Afghanistan. In 1877, a British officer was stationed at Gilgit but was withdrawn in 1881 but again in 1889, the Agency was revived and established under Colonel A.G. Durrand [30A]. The British political officer remained under the control of the Punjab Government till 1877 when all the political relations between the Dogra Court and the British Indian Government were carried through the Punjab Government. But in 1877, the political officer was placed directly under the Political Department of the British Government. The Chitral region continued to remain in perpetual turmoil, unrest and uncertainty prevailed in these regions.

5

Maharaja Ranbir Singh established the Justice department and regular courts came into being during his reign. For the smooth running of this department, criminal and civil laws were formulated and later on consolidated into Ranbir Dandh Bidhi or the Ranbir Penal Code. This is in practice till today and forms part of the State constitution. He made justice prompt, cheaper and regular because the people’s faith in the prevailing judicial system had waned due to the tardy disposal of justice. He handed over the judicial department to executive officials and he made himself available to the generality of his subjects[31]. The Maharaja held two Durbars a day where all petitions were received and heard. Petitions were dictated by the Maharaja to the Munshi who read them in the Durbar[32]. For political prisoners and rebels, separate cells were constructed in jails and those convicted for life- imprisonment, forts were built in the far flung frontier

areas. Food and clothes for the prisoners were decided and arrangements for them were made systematically.

The British interference in the internal affairs of the State was very aggressive. The Governor General in a communication recommended the appointment of a British Resident in the Kashmir Durbar in 1873. But Maharaja Ranbir Singh in a well reasoned communication pointed out that there was no such provision in the Amritsar Treaty of 1846 to appoint a Resident Officer in the State. They were not successful in imposing a Resident so they started a campaign of vilification against the ruler and his administration.

The officer on special duty at the Durbar, Major Henderson had hoisted the 'Union Jack' over his official residence. Maharaja Bahadur deputed Babu Nilamber Mukerji, his most trusted confidante minister to convey that the Resident would not be allowed to fly the Union Jack because it would be a contravention of the Sannads and the Treaty at his disposal[34].

According to the commercial treaty of 1870 between the Maharaja Ranbir Singh and Lord Mayo, the latter was to keep the commerce, trade and political affairs of the Frontier areas under the close vigilance of the British and all duties on trade conducted with Central Asia were abolished. The administration of the trade routes was to be controlled by the Joint Commissioners appointed by the British. They were given special powers and authorized to supervise the trade between Central Asia and British India. The British control over the Ladakh and the Frontier areas by the British Commissioners was a major leap in the political and legal relations between the Maharaja and the British rule in India[35]. It was for the first time that the British had an effective territorial jurisdiction over the parts of the State[36].

Gilgit Agency was established in 1877 through a mutual agreement between Lord Lytton and the Ruler of the State to station a British political agent to head the agency and Captain Buddulph was the first political agent appointed to promote the British designs.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh mistrusted the British. Lord Lytton who played a very significant role in obtaining the Maharaja's consent to the appointment of a British Officer at Gilgit, wrote to the Queen in his letter dated January 10, 1877.

"In the first interview which took place months ago between myself and Kashmir, and which resulted in my securing his assent to the appointment of a British Officer at Gilgit, I noticed that, though perfectly courteous, he was extremely mistrustful of the British Government and myself. He seemed to think that every word I said to him must have a hidden meaning against which he was bound to be on his guard".[37]

6

He introduced the postal and telecommunication services in the State and in 1877, a telegraph service was extended from Sialkot to Jammu and to Kashmir. Five years later, that is in 1882, services were further extended to Gilgit and Askardu. In this way he covered the entire State with a network of postal and telephone services.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh did not interfere in the religious matters of any community and turned his face against discrimination. He treated all communities at par as one entity and urged them to respect all religions. The Maharaja's unreserved religious tolerance can be made out from this factual incident that the Jama Masjid at Srinagar was thrown open for religious use which was closed during the Sikh Rule in 1820. He went to the extent of constructing a water duct for ablutions in the mosque and a committee was formed under Khawja Rahim Shah, Gafoor Shah Naqashbandi and Azim Drabu to collect funds for its repair and Maharaja Bahadur contributed six thousand rupees for this noble cause[38].

The great ghastly famine which struck the valley in 1877 washed away all the potential and populist measures taken by the Maharaja to improve the socio-economic conditions of the shawl weavers, agriculturists and the other labour classes. It plunged the entire valley into the jaws of starvation and the scarcity of all food grains[39]. The Maharaja employed all his resources and administrative machinery to fight this calamity. The British

officialdom in collaboration with the Anglo-Indian press added fuel to the fire by concoting incredible fictitious stories of the lukewarm attitude of the State Government and exploited the situation to malign the ruler[40]. They accused the Maharaja of drowning one and a half lakhs of his poverty-stricken Muslim subjects in the Wular Lake 'to save his grains' and to support this unfounded allegation, the British produced a forged letter of the Maharaja ordering this diabolical action[41]. The British joined hands with the anti-Dogra elements in Kashmir against the wishful intentions of the ruler who had done everything that was humanly possible to ameliorate the sufferings of the majority community[42]. The witnesses who had been promised jagirs by the arch-intriguer, the officer on special duty, when he examined the matter seemed to assume the serious dimensions of humiliation for the Maharaja. The Government of India appointed an enquiry commission to delve deep and probe this serious matter. The people who were alleged to have been drowned in the Wular Lake presented themselves before the enquiry commission in flesh and blood which exposed the hypocrisy plotted by the officer on special duty with the nexus of a few Kashmiris[43]. The whole sinister game plan of the British to regain the possession of Kashmir flopped and ended in a complete fiasco.

Ranbir Singh was absolved of all these exaggerated allegations but the ill-effects of the famine and the conspiracies hatched by the British officers in connivance with the local Kashmir natives left a deep damaging impression on his mind. In 1881 he had a bout of diabetes and his health broke down but in spite of his frail health, struggling between life and death, his concern for the economic amelioration of his subjects never dimmed[44]. He procured a copy of the Chinese book on industries at a considerable price, got it translated into Persian in the hope when published, 'the useful knowledge contained in it would be of utmost benefit for the people of the State'[45].

7

Maharaja Ranbir Singh was a great patron of learning, knowledge and an ardent lover of architecture who built countless temples, shrines and pathshalas. He wanted to make another Kashi in Jammu by constructing a series of temples from Jammu to Purmandal and Utterbehani. The well-

known temples and shrines which he built in Jammu and the surroundings of Jammu are: the Raghunath Temple complex at Jammu, Gadadharji and Raghunath Temple at Utterbehani, and Ranbireshwar and Panchvakhtra Temples in Jammu. Ranbireshwar Temple 'built on an imposing edifice on a lofty square platform below which are twostoreyed rooms for pujaris, priests and pilgrims'. It was built under the supervision of Raja Ram Singh and thrown open to the public on Mahashivratri in February 1871. Ranbireshwar Temple was constructed at the suggestion of Baba Naadgiri who was camping in the vicinity of this area after Maharaja Ranbir Singh suffered debacles in the north-east areas of the State and could not subjugate the tribal chieftains.

8

He brought about a revolutionary change in the field of education. Being gifted with a scholarly bent of mind and his focus in the progress of education was not limited only to the State; he donated liberally to the Sanskrit Pathshala at Benaras and established a big Sanskrit Pathshala at Kashi[46]. He established the first printing press in the State and 'the Jammu and Kashmir Gazette' was published for the first time in the Ranbir Printing Press in 1882.

He established a translation department under the aegis of eminent scholars to translate books from Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and English into Dogri, Urdu and Hindi. Books in different subjects like Astronomy, Mathematics, Physics, Zoology and Chemistry were printed in the Ranbir Press for free distribution to all scholars of the government schools, pathshalas and madrassas[47]. He donated one lac of rupees to Punjab University Lahore and when the university started its regular academic sessions in 1882, 'the name of Maharaja Ranbir Singh was entered as the First Fellow of Punjab University[48]. All the educational institutes of the State were affiliated to this university.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh was tremendously devoted to promote Hindu religion. He not only built a number of temples in the State but also provided for religious enlightenment to his subjects. For this purpose, the

Maharaja established a Mahavidyalaya as part of the temple in the late 1950s.

Eight huge halls were specially constructed amidst the soaring shrines of the Raghunath temple. Each of them was embellished with thousands of shaligramas and many images of gods, goddesses and ancient sages. The four Vedas were taught by gurus well versed in them.

The Raghunath Sanskrit Pathshala used to hold classes for studies in Karma Kand which was an important part of the curriculum.

Being a great patron of learning and knowledge, his court attracted learnedmen from all over India which included Pt. Brij Lal of Jaipur, Rasmohan Bhattacharya from Bengal and Khalifa Noor-ud-Din, the first successor of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, besides a large several learned men from inside the State.

In a reference to Maharaja Ranbir Singh's educational policy, Sir Aurel Stein, the reputed translator of the *Rajatarangini* observes:

"Translations into Hindi of standard works, selected from the whole range of Shastras, were executed and partly printed with the object of spreading a knowledge of classical Hindu learning among his subjects. Again, Persian and Arabic works on historical, philosophical and other subjects were translated into Sanskrit with the help of competent Muslim clerics in order to facilitate the exchange of ideas as Maharaja Ranbir Singh in a spirit of true enlightenment, desired to promote between the representatives of Hindu and Muslim scholars in his dominion. Saidi Gulistan originally written in Persian was translated into Hindi. The Bhagvadagita written in Sanskrit was translated into Persian by Faizi and Raja Jai Singh. Some Ladakhi texts and manuscripts were also translated with the assistance of competent Ladakhi and Tibetan scholars. He spared no effort to enrich his collection. Liberal sums of money were offered for manuscripts and texts not only in Sanskrit but for some in Persian, Arabic and Hindi also. If money failed to purchase the rare manuscript, Maharaja Ranbir Singh deputed highly qualified scholars as copyists at Benaras and other places for this purpose. Ranbir Singh inherited the love of Sanskrit from his illustrious father and he got translated into Sanskrit military terms from the English.

Dr. Stein who catalogued the manuscripts says that “it was the Maharaja’s desire to revive the study of Vedic texts which in his dominion as well as in Punjab had practically ceased for centuries”.

9

The British coercively dominated the internal affairs of the State and never left the ruler to himself to execute the economic measures and painted the picture of the State contrary to the reality and always thwarted the progress of the State. The British in collaboration with the Anglo-Indian Press presented everything in Kashmir as suppressive and oppressive for the outside world. Their ultimate aim was to annex Kashmir at any cost for colonization and to abrogate the Amritsar Treaty of 1846[49]. The constant British intervention in the internal affairs was to create confusion and anarchy in the State which the Viceroy and his junta wished to use to blackmail the Maharaja. This was simply a ploy to station the Resident in the Durbar who could freely indulge in intrigues against the ruler[50].

In 1882, the British pressurized the Maharaja to form a council which consisted of six members, namely Surajmal, Hiranand, Zaina Kak, Akbar Beg, Mirza Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din and Khawja Sannaullah Shawl with Dewan Badrinath, the chief justice as its President[51]. The council had to deal with the financial and administrative matters related to the government and it merely served the purpose of an advisory board[52]. Maharaja Ranbir Singh considered it as an infringement on his right to rule the State and he was against its formation.

In 1884, the Government of India decided to appoint a Resident political officer in the State and asked the Maharaja to conduct correspondence with regard to frontiers and other important matters through the officer on special duty. The ruler protested against this approach adopted by them and asked permission to conduct the correspondence directly with the Governor General but his plea was turned down[53].

Ranbir Singh’s reign saw the most aggressive diplomacy of the nasty British authorities in relation to the State but it always resulted in their

defeat and they had to eat humble pie. The Maharaja showed them the other side of the wall with the sagacity of an accomplished statesman[54].

Ranbir Singh challenged the British ruler in India about the brisk progress made in all departments of his administration and he highlighted the achievements of his government. He explains: 'The administration of my State is improving daily so much that notwithstanding that the country is covered with forests and the inhabitants are armed; the crimes of society marauding have never been committed and the crimes of wilful homicide, murder and burglary are very rare. The police is improving and has increased to three times its value in the past three years. The reason for the all round progress of the State is that I personally superintend all the State affiars'[55].

10

His relations with his subjects were very cordial because the Maharaja used to sit daily in public Durbar in full view of his people receiving and deciding the fate of the petitions submitted for his consideration'[56]. Sir Francis Younghusband in his book *Kashmir Described*, reprint, Sagar Publications, Delhi, 1970, page 174, has described that "holding open Durbar was quite a useful exercise for the people because it taught the people good manners and gave a spectrum of the courtiers and how to comfort themselves before the ruler. These durbars were of great educative value for his subjects where they came to know about much more about the native intelligence, dignity and characters of men brought up for this purpose".

Maharaja Ranbir Singh was an astute statesman and a very efficient administrator. Besides his conquest of the frontier areas, he made brisk progress in the administration of the State and imported the cream of intelligence from across India for governing the affairs of the State[57].

He issued guidelines for the smooth functioning of each department so that they should bring prosperity for its people. He established the police department and hospitals for free distribution of medicines to the poor strata of the State. He constructed a network of roads, inns for the travellers and

rectified the supply system and established a network of communications. He further extended the telegraph from Srinagar to Gilgit and then to Askardu in 1882[58].

He reorganized the army and divided the State army into four battalions under one General. Two battalions were stationed in Jammu, one at Kashmir and the fourth one was spread at Gilgit, Baltistan and Ladakh to control the frontier areas. The troops were transferred regularly after every two years[59].

Jhelum valley road between Srinagar and Kohala was started during his reign for vehicular traffic but it could not be completed during his lifetime. The credit of completing this road from Srinagar to Rawalpindi went to Maharaja Pratap Singh[60].

He was a great philanthropist, religiously a devoted person and a humane ruler besides being successful in his approach towards the British officialdom[61]. He never bowed in the face of unjust demands made by the British and outwitted them in their self-seeking concessions with his reasoning power and logical arguments[59].

Maharaja Ranbir Singh was a judicious and liberal minded ruler who initiated a plethora of wide ranging innovative measures for the benefit of his subjects. Through his sincere, sustained and consistent efforts he achieved incredible success for the overall development of the State and morphed the socio-economic conditions of his subjects during his rulership. He would be acknowledged as the most popular ruler who was conscious of his duties and obligations towards his subjects[63]. He improved the status of his administration with dedication and lofty ideals of service.

During his twenty-eight year rule he achieved unparalleled prosperity for his subjects, remained unruffled and unfazed, successfully foiled all British strategies to impose the Resident in the State and throughout his rule maintained complete and unrestricted independence in internal matters and gave to Jammu and Kashmir an enviable political identity[64].

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MAHARAJA PRATAP SINGH (1850 - 1925) 1

Maharaja Ranbir Singh died on September 12, 1885 at Jammu and his eldest son, Mian Pratap Singh was formally recognized as successor to the throne of Jammu and Kashmir State, The British Indian Government exploited the strained relations between Pratap Singh and his younger brothers, Ram Singh and Amar Singh, and they accepted of a British Resident, a pre-condition for giving recognition to his succession to the throne in 1885[1]. To quote H.L Saxena in his *Tragedy of Kashmir* about the hypocrisy of the British rulers in India – page 2:

“During the last days of Maharaja Ranbir Singh when he was bedridden the Political Department carried on a sustained virulent campaign of vilification through the AngloIndian press against his eldest son, Mian Pratap Singh, the heir apparent, with an avowed objective to discredit him. He was depicted as the most undesirable and unwanted person but in reality he was a very religious and pious man. The British intentionally wanted to exploit the malicious lies at the time of his succession to the Kashmir throne to bypass his claim if Pratap Singh did not concede to the appointment of a British Resident at his court”. He assumed the rulership of the State on September 25, 1885, after the mourning period was over by then.

Ranbir Singh’s second son, Raja Ram Singh, a connoisseur of horses, served as Commander-in-Chief of the State forces till his death in 1899, was granted the Ramnagar jagir. In the capacity of Commander-in-Chief of the State forces, he visited Askardu and Gilgit, evaluated the social conditions of the region and took reformative steps for the betterment of the tribal areas. Besides he took a keen interest in reorganizing and upgrading the status of State forces. Maharaja Ranbir Singh’s third youngest son, Amar Singh’s name had been strongly recommended to the Political Department of the Government of India for his succession twice in 1882

and 1884 by the ruler himself but which was rejected[2]. So the rights of ascending to the throne of the State went in favour of Pratap Singh being, the eldest son of the ruler. Raja Amar Singh possessed rare statesmanly qualities, wielded tremendous influence in the administration and was given Bhaderwah Jagir.

2

Ever since the British rulers in India had ceded the strategic area of Gilgit to Maharaja Gulab Singh by virtue of the Treaty of Amritsar finalized on March 16, 1846, in his permanent possession, they had realized their heinous blunder. They waited for the right time to strike and to regain the control of Gilgit by any means. This opportunity came in 1885 after the death of Maharaja Ranbir Singh when the question of rulership cropped up about the successor to the Kashmir throne[3]. British strategy throughout the 1880s was to put into practice a plan of direct intervention in the internal affairs of the Indian Princely States and Jammu and Kashmir was no exception for them. Viceroy Lord Duffering, on September 14, 1885, communicated through the officer on special duty to Pratap Singh pointing out the dire need of introducing substantial innovative measures for the betterment of the most neglected lot of the State. It was conveyed to Pratap Singh without mincing words to station a permanent Resident political officer at the Durbar due to the lurking danger of Russian influence on the Pamirs[4]. The British Indian Government vehemently favoured the promotion of officer on special duty to that of Resident and they felt that the existing state of affairs was most unfortunate and had degenerated[5]. Pratap Singh pleaded to shelve the appointment of the Resident officer and asked for time to improve the administration. The appeal was rejected and Pratap Singh had no alternative but was forced to accept the new arrangement[6].

With the installation of the heir apparent, Mian Pratap Singh, as the ruler of the State also synchronized the elevation of Sir Oliver St. John as Resident Political officer at the Kashmir Durbar who would act as his advisor in giving a face lift to the administration[7].The Resident practically held control over all the departments as he was the final arbiter in all matters and he had the powers to veto any resolution passed by the Council or suspend

action pending further explanation[8]. The Resident and his assistants were empowered with judicial powers to try civil suits and they unabashedly fanned the separatist tendencies in the majority community in order to disturb the communal harmony of the State without any accountability[9]. As planned, the British rulers in India were successful in imposing a Resident at the time of succession of Pratap Singh to the prime slot. Decks were cleared to strip the Maharaja of his royal ruling powers with the quick succession of Residents at the Durbar when Pratap Singh had not settled down on the throne.

The correspondence of the new entrant with the Government of India had to pass through the hawkish eyes of the Resident and the situation became as they had planned[10]. During his four-month tenure as Resident of the State, Sir Oliver St. John reported that the Maharaja was incompetent to rule the State[11]. He was replaced by T.C. Plowden in January 1886, who was a die hard British bureaucrat and aptly perfect in hatching intrigues. He wrote to the Viceroy that the Maharaja was an imbecile, lacked intelligence and he would be a hindrance in all attempts to improve the administration[12]. In the same year 1886, the British rulers in India were convinced that the Gilgit–Hunza region of the State required strict vigil on account of the strategic location in the NorthWestern Himalayas[13].

T.C Plowden was replaced by Sir Parry S. Nisbet as Resident of the State on February 27, 1889. A quick succession of events took place during his tenure. Some forged letters in the handwriting of Maharaja Pratap Singh were seized by this scheming Resident “claiming to have been written by the ruler himself to his servants to kill the Resident by poisoning him and revealing the treasonable correspondence with the Russian Czar. The Anglo-Indian press came out with sensational news that the Maharaja was found guilty of treasonable activities”[14]. When this news caught notoriety, there was a wave of resentment both in London and in Calcutta, the seat of power[15].

The entire conspiracy against the Maharaja was brought to light and exposed by an enterprising editor of the Amrita Bazar Patrika of Calcutta, Babu Moti Lal Ghosh[16]. The Patrika took up the cause of Maharaja and secured a secret note of the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India,

showing the British anxiety to take the frontier districts of the State under their direct control and for that purpose to control the internal affairs of the State[17]. The idea of deposing the Maharaja and annexation of the State was dropped. Charles Bradlaugh raised this issue in the British House of Commons about the annuality of the Maharaja's rights as a ruler. The entire episode became known as the 'Kashmir Imbroglio' throughout India.

In the chaotic situation that followed, the Resident presented Maharaja Pratap Singh with the draft of an edict of resignation announcing his temporary abdication in favour of a Council with Raja Amar Singh as its President[18].The contents of the edict were: "In the interest of the State and for better administration of the country and with a view to remodel it, I hereby authorize a council, the members of which for a period of five years will conduct all the affairs of the State". The Resident Nisbet forwarded the Irshad of Maharaja's voluntary abdication to Sir Mortimer Durrand, the Foreign Secretary of the Government of India for its early acceptance[19] and his dismissal as a ruler of the State. In a separate note, the Resident stoutly recommended that the 'The ruler is a timid man at the entire mercy of a set of scoundrels and there appears to me weighty reasons for advising the practical setting aside of the ruler's authority'[20]. Based on the report of the Resident, the British Crown replaced Maharaja Pratap Singh's rule by a State Council on April 1, 1889 and strengthened the garrisons on the northern borders[21].

William Digby, the Liberal Party member in the British Parliament, declared that there was no misrule in Kashmir and that the real basis of the Maharaja's abdication was the fear of Russian aggression towards India[22]. All these manoeuvres, sinister designs and diplomatic muscle, applied by the British Indian Government stripped Maharaja Pratap Singh's ruling powers which resulted in his virtual dismissal from the seat of power. He survived from being dethroned but his ruling powers came under deep and dark clouds.

A five -member Council was formed which included his younger brother, Ram Singh and Amar Singh besides Pt. Suraj Mal and Bagh Ram as Ministers and an English member especially selected by the Political Department, Government of India[23]. The real administrative powers

remained with the Resident[24] and Amar Singh served the Council in the capacity of its Prime Minister. Maharaja Pratap Singh continued to enjoy the honorary rights of a ruler but could not intervene in the affairs of the State[25]. All his pleadings, requests and protests about the nasty treatment meted out to him proved to be futile and brought no reprieve for him. He went into a fast and did not touch food and water continuously for two days. He had been sidelined from the administration and they had usurped his ruling royal powers.

Indian contemporary belief was that the Maharaja Pratap Singh had been made a seapegoat because of the British designs over Gilgit and the allegations of misrule were simply a ploy to take over the control of the Gilgit Agency[26].

3

In this turbulence, Raja Amar Singh inadvertently emerged to be the most powerful person who ‘safeguarded the State from being annexed by the British rulers in India and he maintained the independent character of the State’[27].

Not satisfied with this, the British made a determined bid to have direct control over the strategic areas of the State. The expansion policies of the Russian Czar in Central Asia over the Pamirs and frontier areas of Chitral, Hunza and Nagar continued to worry the British strategists. The military campaigns launched between 1889 and 1895 by the Dogra forces under the command of British commanders were to seize Chitral which passed under the direct control of the British Political Agent after the successful termination of these campaigns but the administrative control of the region remained with State officials. The heroic deeds and valour of the Dogra troops and the detailed graphic account of these campaigns depicted in Mr. White’s book *Where Three Empires Meet* brought Gilgit on the map of the world.

After subjugating these northern regions and crushing the powers of the chieftains, the British Government retained them as Governors of their principalities by a formal proclamation issued in the name of the Maharaja.

The State and the Political Agent exercised practically unlimited powers of interference not only in the external but also in the internal affairs of their regions. Gilgit Agency promoted the British Imperial interests but the expenditure on its establishments and the administration of these districts was borne out by the Jammu and Kashmir State. 'The expenditure included not only the cost of maintenance of the Agency and the State troops of Gilgit but also the construction of roads and the establishment of dispensaries and schools within the Gilgit Territory'[28] were borne out by the State Exchequer Thus the British Indian Government was successful in regaining the control of the strategic area of Gilgit which they were parted from 1846 because of their compulsions.

4

During Maharaja Pratap Singh's long reign of forty years from 1885 to 1925, the amelioration of the social and economic conditions of the most neglected lot of the State made a brisk headway. The progress and well-being of the State got accelerated and the administration was completely overhauled for the betterment of the unprivileged strata of the State. Maharaja Pratap Singh introduced a series of reforms which included the abolition of State monopolies, reorganization of the financial administration and rationalization of taxes, construction of network of roads linking the capital cities of the State to give a boost to trade and tourism and the removal of restriction of emigration[29].

Lord Ripon, the father of local selfgovernment in India, passed the Act of 1882 which laid the foundation of local selfgovernment in India[30]. The Political Resident in the State – the representative of the Government of India-wanted to transplant a system similar to what existed in the rest of British India. He pressurized Maharaja Pratap Singh to introduce this system in the State[31]. As a result of the keen interest taken by the Resident, the State Government took the initiative in this direction and passed an Act styled the Municipal Act in 1886, thus a humble start was made in the democratic process by giving representation to the people in the local bodies by establishing municipalities in the capital towns of Jammu and

Kashmir[32]. Later on municipalities were established in the major towns of the State i.e. Sopore, Baramulla, Udhampur and Mirpur.

5

When Maharaja Pratap Singh ascended the throne, the State Government was passing through the worst phase because its economy was faltering and it had gone financially bankrupt. The fertile lands ought to be cultivated remained uncultivated because the peasantry was requisitioned to serve the purpose of forced labour and Begar (Unpaid labour) in carrying the goods to Gilgit and the Army was employed to sow and plough the fields. At the time of harvest, regiments known as Nizamat Paltans moved in the villages to enforce the State's claim to the land revenue[33]. The peasantry was left with very few grains to survive.

The services of Sir Walter Lawrence were acquired to handle the land revenue settlement which was a very onerous job. The job of land settlement was entrusted to Mr. Wingate two years earlier but was sabotaged by the privileged and corrupt officials of the State. But Sir Walter Lawrence continued his efforts in spite of stiff opposition and completed the job in the valley by 1893 and by the end of 1912, practically every tehsil and district in the State, was settled for the first time[34].

The salient features of the settlement of land effected by Walter Lawrence were as under:

1. The State demand of the land revenue was fixed for fourteen years. 2. The land revenue was to be paid in cash only.

3. Forced labour or Begar, in its harsh and objectionable form was abolished.

4. Coercive methods in the collection of revenue were stopped.

5. Occupancy rights were conferred on the cultivators whose rights were undisputed.

6. The holdings of privileged holders of land in excess of the sanctioned area was assessed on ordinary rates.

7. Water lands were considered as ‘Khalsa’ or State property, but preferential right for acquisitions of such lands by tenants was granted.

8. Those land holders who accepted the first assessment were granted permanent but non-alienable hereditary rights.

9. All land was carefully evaluated keeping in view its produce, collection and possibility of irrigation.

10. The illegal exactions like ‘Rasum’ were abolished and the rents and liabilities of cultivators were defined.

After the finalization of Sir Walter Lawrence’s memorable land settlement work, Maharaja Pratap Singh waived the land revenue to the tune of thirty one lakhs of rupees despite the stiff opposition from his courtiers[35].

6

In 1891 some objectionable features of the unpaid labour or Begar system were scrapped because of its extreme exploitation of the peasantry by the senior officials in the administration. The State Council with the active support of the Resident framed stringent rules to regulate the employment of the labour carrying the essential goods in the State. To meet the requirements of the Transport Department, a force comprising 1000 labourers and 200 pack ponies were permanently employed. In 1906, the State Government reviewed its functioning which was further modified. By now the voluntary labour started coming forth for employment and the institution of recruiting the forced labour or Begar system was completely abolished in 1920[36]. Oppressive taxes were abolished and the Muslim marriage tax was remitted. Certain monopolies such as the shawl industry were scrapped. Maharaja Pratap Singh kept absolute religious neutrality and objectivity in religious matters[37].

The State was least developed and there were not adequate means of communication with British India. A Cart road was constructed during his reign to link Srinagar with Rawalpindi, the nearest rail-head in British India. Jhelum valley cart road 'the most wonderful mountain road in the world' from Kohala to Baramulla was further extended to Srinagar in 1897. Another important highway, the Banihal cart Road, was started in 1909 and it was completed in 1922 at the cost of forty-three lakhs of rupees. It was thrown open to public traffic in July 1922 which connected the two capital cities of the State[38]. This road facilitated the free flow of goods from one region to another as also the frequent units of the people of Jammu region to Kashmir and viceversa[39].

7

The Sialkot Jammu rail link was an extension of the North Western Railway by which the isolation of the Jammu province was broken'[40]. The work on this line commenced in October 1888 under the supervision of the Chief Engineer of the North Western Railway, Major General de Bourber[41]. Dharmarth Trust, established by Maharaja Gulab Singh, invested the entire amount of eleven lakhs from the initial to completion stage which was later on taken over by the State Government after paying the loan to the Dharmarth trust. It was thrown open to general traffic on March 13, 1890 and it was known as Jammu and Kashmir State Railway. The project of bringing Kashmir on the railway map could not be realized owing to the paucity of funds. Maharaja Pratap Singh constituted a team of experts under Major General de Bourber, Chief Engineer (J&K State) and two service engineers, Mr. Gilbert and Mr. A. Fever to conduct comprehensive surveys to link the valley through railways with the rest of India. Mr. S.A. Anderson of the team recommended the following routes:

1. The Banihal Route
2. The Poonch Route
3. The Abbotabad Route
4. The Punjab Route.

Maharaja Pratap Singh was allergic to all these routes except for one, that was the Banihal Route.

The Indian British Government was adamant that while extending the rail track from Jammu to Srinagar, all the technical and skilled infrastructure required would be imported from British India and the services of the unskilled labour would be used from the State. This was unacceptable to the Maharaja. The other precondition was while digging the tunnels for laying the rail-tracks, the mineral wealth if struck, would be owned by the British Government. The Maharaja outrightly rejected this proposal put forward by them.

'The ruler of Jammu and Kashmir State, Maharaja Pratap Singh had decided to connect the Kashmir valley with Jammu through a railway line way back towards the close of the 19th century. This dream would have been realized if the then British India Government had given a grant of rupees fifty lakhs to meet the expenses for this prestigious project.

A team of engineers was formed to survey the possibilities of laying the railway track between the two parts of the State in 1889. The team submitted its report to the ruler in 1892 in which it recommended a 197.5 km rail line between the two regions.

Maharaja Pratap Singh laid the foundation stone of the Kashmir railway at Hazoori bagh in Srinagar on March 1, 1892. It had to be an electric train besides some electric power stations were also constructed en route to the train and it was named Jammu and Kashmir Light Electric Railway.

The total budget for this project was estimated to be 3.52 crores.

Though the project could not take off due to the constraints of funds but the survey conducted at that time was used after more than 60 years for constructing the Jawahar tunnel where the Maharaja's engineers had proposed a railway tunnel after conducting the soil test [42].

8

Maharaja Pratap Singh undertook several irrigation projects in order to save the State from the frequent occurrence of famines. Martand Canal, LalKhul, Pratap Canal, Basantarpur Canal, Upper Jhelum Canal and the Ranbir Canal were opened during his rule time and Zainagar Canal was completed in the year 1931 at the cost of eleven lakhs. The Ranbir Canal being the largest one of the Jammu province was drawn from the Chenab at Akhnoor in 1911. It was used to irrigate the entire Ranbir Singh Pura Tehsil[43]. This canal had the capacity to irrigate 125,956 acres of land[44]. These irrigation projects based on modern lines were introduced in the State so that the arid lands should be irrigated to bring greenery and prosperity.

“Dredging operations were carried out below the town of Baramulla for removing silt. A great spill channel for directing the flood waters of Jhelum was constructed between Ram Munshi Bagh and Pandrethan. A weir was constructed across the Jhelum at Chhatabal to maintain sufficient water in the river in times of droughts”[45]. Modern water works were established in both the provinces of the State for free and potable supply of water.

Hydro electric power generating plants were set up in the State, one at a Mahura in 1902 and the other power house at Jammu. The power generated through these plants was used not only for supplying light to the urban areas but it was also used for industrial purposes.

The epidemics (cholera and small-pox)

The epidemics (cholera and small-pox) 07 and in 1910 respectively and ten thousands lives were lost in these epidemics. The State Government took measures to fight these diseases and vaccination was introduced in the State. The State Government established wellequipped modern hospitals in the State to provide medical facilities. Maternity hospitals were set up in both the provinces of Jammu and Kashmir. Dispensaries under qualified doctors were established in almost all the important towns of the State.

Tremendous efforts were made to improve the quality of indigenous fruits produced in Kashmir. With the passage of time the fruit growing industry flourished with the help of French experts and acquired a leading position in the export trade of Kashmir[46]. The State Government established a

Department of Agriculture and Horticulture in the year 1897 and a representative of the State Government sat on the Board of Agriculture of the Government of India from 1908 onwards[47]. A model agricultural farm was established in the State to train the farmers about the scientific methods of cultivation.

Serious efforts were made by Maharaja Pratap Singh to revive the sericulture industry which had suffered a great setback during the times of Afghan and Sikh rule in Kashmir. A factory for rearing cocoons was established at Srinagar in 1907 for which the seeds were imported from Italy and France and distributed among the Kashmiri peasants to rear them[48]. It attained the positions of being the largest industry of its kind in the world and by 1920 it produced over one lakh kilogram of raw cocoons.

9

The State Government established its own Mining Department to explore the natural resources of the State. Some companies floated by the Europeans were issued licences for exploring the mineral wealth of the State[49]. The State Government established the Forest Department to exploit the wealth of the forests on scientific methods and acquired the expert services of the efficient English officers who were the product of the Dehradun Forest School.

The British Government tried to bring pressure on the Maharaja to permit the Europeans to own land in Kashmir. But Maharaja Pratap Singh refused the permission. The ban on the British to own land led to the construction of house boats which became a unique institution in the State[50]. So in this way the Kashmiris living in reclusion came into close contact with the people living in other parts of India[51].

During the period from 1893 to 1903, Kashmir province suffered heavy loss of life and prosperity caused by the frequent floods. The State Engineer, Mr. Field, made projects for the protection of Srinagar from floods and concrete bunds were constructed round the low-lying areas of the valley[52].

Education was modernized and made open to everyone irrespective of caste or community in the State. In order to meet the requirements of higher education, two first grade Arts Colleges with necessary infrastructure were established, one at Srinagar as a result of the efforts of Mrs. Annie Besant and the second one at Jammu known as Prince of Wales College in 1906. Highly equipped technical institutes were set up in the State to cope with the needs of the youth.

Maharaja Pratap Singh's rule saw some signs of political unrest in the State. There was a hue and cry over the lukewarm attitude of the State Government towards the promotion of education among the majority community. The services of Mr. Sharp, the Education Commissioner of India, were acquired in 1916 to make recommendations to spread a network of education in the light of deplorable conditions prevailing in the State. The Maharaja accepted the report submitted by Mr. Sharp after a thorough study of the problems[53]. The administration being sluggish did not help to implement them in the true spirit. Thus the Muslims were a dejected lot.

10

Maharaja Pratap Singh, accredited ruler of the State, did not exercise any executive powers in practice reflected his dissatisfaction in a letter addressed to the British Government: "I am not even allowed to sign papers for the resident. I cannot even appoint a Tehsildar. Really I am helpless, nothing is in my hands". The Maharaja's pleadings for the reinstatement of powers resulted in some changes in the Rules of Business of the Executive Council in 1896. Maharaja Pratap Singh was empowered "to send for the proceedings of the Council and if he did not agree with any of its decisions or orders, he could refer back to the Council".

By 1895, the British Indian Government had consolidated its position on the NorthWestern Frontiers of India and had established cordial relations with the Afghan ruler; the British were willing to restore some powers to the Maharaja[54]. Viceroy Lord Curzon abolished the institution of State Council in 1905 to facilitate the Maharaja and some nominal powers were restored to him. But foreign relations, finances of the State, the armed

forces and administrative appointments were controlled by the British officialdom in India[55].

A new development of Muslim separatism was in its infancy during the early 1920s. Maulvi Rasul Shah, the Mirwaiz of Kashmir, wielded tremendous political and religious influence over the Kashmiris, founded the Anjuman-I-Nusrat-ul-Islam in 1905 and its sole object was to spread doctrinal Islam[56]. Thus the Anjuman sowed the seeds of uproar, turmoil and agitational approach to project the grievances of the Kashmiris. With the passage of time, it took the shape of mass meetings to be followed by agitations against the Dogra Rule[57].

In 1908, Raja Amar Singh died who had played a very important role in the political drama of the State and Maharaja Pratap Singh was left to himself to 'wield his partially restored powers with great authority'[58]. With the death of Raja Amar Singh, all the problems of Maharaja Pratap Singh came to an end. Being a person of far-sighted vision and under the guise of friendship with the British, Raja Amar Singh overtly or covertly protected the integrity of the State when the British Indian administration was hell bent to annex it.

During the First World War of 1914-18, Maharaja Pratap Singh placed all his sources at the disposal of the British Government in the hope of restoration of powers. "The fast growing tide of nationalism in India had made the British Government nervous and they were desperately in search of some loyal friends in India to combat the national forces. Hence in their own interests, the British Government changed its policy towards the Indian States and looked with an eye of favours. As a result, the chances of Pratap Singh to regain full powers became brighter "[59].

11

The contemporary political scene in India was mired with turbulence and political unrest and Jallianwala Bagh massacre rocked the British Empire.

"Brigadier General Reginald Edward Harry Dyer alighted from his car to be followed by twenty-five Gorkhas and twenty-five Baluchis armed with

khukhris and rifles. Dyer's voice thundered: 'Fire', and he directed the fire to spots where the crowd was thick. The process of indiscriminate firing continued till the soldiers' ammunition got exhausted. Without casting a glance at the carnage, Dyer drove back to his headquarters at Rambagh while the Jallianwala Bagh presented the scene of a gory battlefield.

'Long processions of mourners followed the carts piled with corpses. Four or five corpses were cremated on each pyre. No one counted the dead bodies. After about four months, the government declared that the toll was 379 dead and 192 wounded. Unofficial sources counted one thousand dead. The soldiers had recklessly pumped 1650 bullets on the innocent crowd.

The methods employed by the administration of Sir Michael O' Dwyer, the pugnacious Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, to mobilize men for the army were widely resented. After the First World War, the Government of India felt the need to replace the Defence of India Act to suppress the political movement in India. In December, 1917, the Government of India appointed Sir Sidney Rowlatt to recommend legislation to curb sedition.

He recommended two bills commonly known as 'Rowlatt Acts'. The Imperial Legislative Council unabashedly passed the Bills but the Indian members Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Nazarul Haque and Mohd. Ali Jinnah voted against this legislation and resigned.

The Rowlatt Act empowered the government to detain any one without trial and to try people before special courts where there was no right to appeal. The movement against it was the most acute in Sir Michael O' Dwyer's Punjab.

In Gandhiji, the Indians found a strong opponent of the Rowlatt Act and called for a hartal and fixed March 30, 1919 as a day of total fasting all over the country. O' Dwyer viewed Gandhiji call with apprehension and forbade Dr. Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal from making any public appearance.

Miles Irving, the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, warned the eminent citizens to get the hartal cancelled and to observe restraint. On April 12, General Dyer marched through the city with a drummer and a town crier

who read out a proclamation – “Any procession or gathering of four persons will be treated as an unlawful assembly and dispersed by force of arms, if necessary”. In another part of the city, a crowd was being told that a meeting would be held the next day, April 13, at Jallianwala Bagh.
The heinous act of massacre was committed on April 13, 1919, the Baisakhi Day considered to be an auspicious occasion when the season for harvesting of crops start.

Martial Law was clamped in Amritsar and Lahore district on April 15, further extended to Gujranwala on the 16th, to Gujrat on the 19th and Lyallpur on the 24th April.

In the House of Commons Montagu was under pressure for the details of the massacre. He asked Chelmsford to enquire into the whole affair. Appalled, Chelmsford warned for a wider enquiry as the Indian extremists whose aim was to discredit the British administration and to harm O’ Dwyer’s reputation.

The Indian National Congress pleaded for the severe indictment of the British rule in Punjab on February 20, 1920, and declared that O’ Dwyer and General Dyer deserved to be impeached but their dismissal was very urgent.

Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for war, announced in the House of Commons the dismissal of General Dyer from the service. Living as a recluse on the outskirts of Bristol, he suffered a severe stroke and died on July 23, 1927.

After the massacre in Jallianwala Bagh, a young orphan from Sunam took a solemn oath of revenge and it took the young Udham Singh twenty-one years to redeem his pledge. Udham Singh shot dead Sir Michael O’ Dwyer in London’s Caxton Hall when he pumped six rapid shots from his pistol. This was the climax of the bloody drama that started in Amritsar” [60].

The catastrophe of Jallianwala Bagh created tremors and had multi-dimensional effects which subdued the administrative spirits of the British rulers in India. It was one of the aspects which inadvertently tilted the scale in favour of Maharaja Pratap Singh in restoring his royal ruling powers.

12

On September 18, 1920, pleading his war services, rendered to the British Imperial Government, Maharaja Pratap Singh appealed to the Viceroy for the restoration of his powers which were annexed in 1889. The Resident Bannerman also endorsed that the British Indian Government should consider his case and accede to his wishes at the fag end of his life[61]. After securing an undertaking from the Maharaja that the Resident would be consulted on all matters pertaining to frontier areas and in administrative measures, Lord Chelmsford restored the Maharaja's full powers in a Durbar held in Jammu on February 4, 1921[62] but without control over the political Agency in Gilgit. The State Executive Council consisting of five members with the Maharaja himself as the President and Raja Hari Singh as its senior member was formed. On the advice of Hari Singh, Mr. Wakefield, an officer of the Political Department posted at Hyderabad, was appointed as the Chief Secretary of the Executive Council.[63] The members of the Council were allocated portfolios and the Maharaja had the power to veto their orders and decisions[62]. The Council kept functioning till September 1925, when the Maharaja died.

"Towards the later part of 1924, Muhammed Iqbal, Shair-e-Mushraq, Poet of the East, sponsor of Islamic hegemony, advocated the formation of a State within a State. He gave an impetus to the idea that the good Muslim should turn his back on India and his face towards Mecca." [64]

He augmented the concept of separatism. The workers of the State owned silk factory in Srinagar went on a flash strike in 1924 for an increase in wages and for the removal of Kashmiri Pandit management who indulged in corrupt methods to fleece the workers. The strike became a platform to project the grievances of the majority community against the ruler. The pernicious effects of the British Indian schisms were felt in these disturbances[65]. The Muslims of Kashmir who were fed on virulent communal propaganda, held demonstrations and protests against the Maharaja's rule[66].

It became locally known that Lord Reading along with his Lady Alice would be on a visit to Srinagar at the invitation of Maharaja Pratap Singh in October 1924. In a secret meeting held by the prominent members of the majority community under Khawja Saad-ud-Din-Shawl's leadership where it was decided to present a memorandum to the Viceroy for the vindication of their rights[67] and the removal of several irksome restrictions and disabilities under which they worked[68]. Saad-ud-Din was the prime mover of this movement who was credited with the modern political movement in Kashmir[69].

Agha Haider, by profession an advocate hailing from Lucknow, helped in drafting the petition. This representation was signed by Khawja Saad-ud-Din Shawl, Khawja Hassan Shah Naqshbandi, Mir Waiz Maulvi Ahmedullah, Mirwaiz Hamdani, Aga Syed Hussain Shah Jalali, Mufti Sharifud-Din and Khawja Hassan Shah Mahandi. The memorandum was submitted to Lord Reading through Mohsin Shah which read as: "The Muslims of Kashmir are in a deplorable plight today. Their education needs are woefully neglected though forming 96 per cent of the population; the percentage of literacy among them is only 0.8 per cent". This memoralia also contained other grievances about the closure of certain mosques in Srinagar and desecration of Khanqua Bulbul Shah[70]. The most offending accusation it contained was that there was no hope of justice from the present ruler Maharaja Pratap Singh and so his powers should be transferred to the Resident[71]. The other demands which were a part of this memorandum included "the creation of representative institutions; the concessions in the services to the Muslims on the basis of population and the conferment of proprietary rights over lands to the tenants"[72].

Lord Reading 'who perfected the imperial policy of divide and rule in India'[73] forwarded it to the Maharaja for his consideration. Maharaja Pratap Singh appointed a three-member committee consisting of Mr. Glancy, the State Finance Minister, Rai Bahadur Colonel Janak Singh and Chaudhari Khushi Mohammad Nazir to go into the depth of the matter and give its findings[74]. The committee formed to probe the matter submitted its report and took particular exception to the clause in the memorial relating to an attack on the integrity of the ruler and exonerated the charges against the ruler as unfounded and exaggerated.

Mr. Saad-ud-Din was externed from the State on March 25, 1925; Mr. Hassan Shah Naqshbandi's jagir was confiscated and his son, Noor Shah was dismissed from his Tehsildarship[75]; Hassan Shah Jalali was also dismissed from the position of Zaildar while the properties of all the signatories were confiscated and the waizes were let off after stern warnings. The pseudo political disruptions were in an elementary stage and were suppressed easily by the State administration[76].

The exiled Khawja Saad-ud-Din Shawl continued his struggle from British India for reformative measures in Kashmir[77] condemning the repressive rule of Maharaja Pratap Singh. The unrest and the confrontal approach of Kashmiris further snowballed into a great movement of political awakening in 1931[78]. The Jammu Muslims distanced themselves from this representation because of any commonality with the Kashmiri Muslims[79]. An organization under the auspices of the All India Kashmir Muslim conference had been formed in British India to convey its solidarity to the Kashmiri cause against the Dogra rule.

'Addicted to opium, misguided by his favourites he was endowed with a sharp retentive power and he listened to the grievances of his subjects and reprimanded the officer who neglected to redress them. He was averse to political freedom and liberty of the press. He was a benevolent and generous ruler and had sympathy with those who were in trouble. It is rightly said that the long spell of peace, prosperity and security that his subjects enjoyed during his reign was responsible for the growth of political consciousness among the Kashmiris and served as a stage to launch their successful struggle for the achievement of a democratic government in free India'[80].

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MAHARAJA HARI SINGH

Administratively before Maharaja Hari Singh assumed the rulership of the State, the areas that comprised the vast State were the Jammu province with the jagirs of Poonch and Chenani, the Kashmir province and the Frontier districts of Ladakh, Ballistan and Gilgit[1]. The stately rule of the Dogra dynasty passed on to Hari Singh, son of General Raja Amar Singh and great grandson of Maharaja Gulab Singh as being the only lineal descendant alive[2], after the death of Maharaja Pratap Singh on September 23, 1925, at Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir State.

He inherited the legacy left by his predecessor which contained the contours of social unrest, and was brewing with resentment against the Dogra rule. He was sensitive to the sufferings of the most marginalized and neglected lot of the State and wanted to be liberal in his approach. His methodology of ruling the state was entirely different from his predecessors as it was based on the concept of justice and economic independence from the extreme exploitation to be followed by political independence. He wanted to wipe out poverty, ignorance, social maladies, inequality of opportunity and superstitions from the State.

Maharaja Hari Singh ruled one of the least developed, least literate and one of the largest Princely States of Jammu and Kashmir for a quarter of a century until it was terminated after he was pushed out of the State. With Hari Singh's ouster from the State culminated the 100 years rule of the Dogra dynasty which his great grand father, Maharaja Gulab Singh, had established after the disintegration of the Sikh State by silencing his foes.

Maharaja Hari Singh would eternally stand out as a towering personality who never staggered in moments of crisis and suffered 'greater vicissitudes than any other Ruler'[2A] in free India due to the whims of his staunch opponents. He would be acknowledged for the gigantic task of socio-economic transformation of the State and his thrust of reforms, development and rehabilitation policies which he expeditiously implemented with a gusto for modernizing the State with perfect planning for its overall progress and prosperity. In scope he embraced every sphere in which amelioration could be effected and he quickened the tempo of reforms, a process started by his predecessors. He wanted to uplift the rural

masses and rural economy, accelerate the development process and to brighten the prospectus of agricultural growth and productivity.

Flagship schemes and a process of reforms to uplift the agricultural community of the state were kick- started to be implemented effectively which sent strong vibes across the length and breadth of the State. It was his strategy to salvage the lives of the poverty-stricken peasantry and to meet this target, his administration provided quality inputs like fertilizers, superior quality of seeds, 'bulls of Sindhi and Dhani breeds' were imported and distributed among the peasants in selected villages. The State share of land revenue was increased to 30 per cent of the gross produce which gave some relief to the cultivators'[3].

'The State established and consolidated by his forefathers, became a great facilitating factor for his leading role in political events of his time. Modern education and exposure to social environment inculcated in him firm and determined commitment to usher an era of social equality which he valued highly in life'[4]. He wanted to initiate the measure of gradual democratization of administration and to make it more broadbased and liberal. During his rulership, a wellshaped copus of administration was in existence'[5] until the appointment of Sheikh Abdullah as Chief Emergency Administrator soon after the accession of the State in October 1947, who shredded the norms of meritocracy, established by Maharaja Hari Singh after years of labour.

Sheikh Abdullah acquired for himself the status of an independent ruler even without consulting the Prime Minister, Meherchand Mahajan or the Maharaja himself and undertook to over-haul the entire administration, haphazardly dismissing, transferring and retiring the government employees irrespective of any rank and file, replacing them by his favourites from the National Conference Cadres[6]. He shattered all decencies, decorum and crossed all limits when newspaper agents were appointed top administrators and persons from cooperative societies were appointed as Deputy Commissioners[7]. Thus he degenerated the whole machinery of the State administration from beginning to the end of his rule in August 1953. His rule was nothing more or less than an antiHindu crusade and the Hindu minority had no place whatsoever[8]. Thus he pushed the administration to

irretrievable confusion. Sheikh Abdulla's usurpation of executive authority after being appointed the Emergency administrator was that he eclipsed all the democratic norms by creating political approvals which were of irreparable damage. For his rash misdeeds, he earned the wrath of Pt. Nehru and was eased out of his Prime Ministership by no less than on the signals of his mentor. The hand that had endeared him, uprooted the same tree ruthlessly for the turbulence created by his Mephistophelean figure.

Maharaja Hari Singh, a vibrant and a multi faceted personality, donning "a fabulous crown studded with emeralds and diamonds and with a matching sword",[9] wearing a tiara of priceless and splendid pearls round his neck, tucking a small sized portrait of the late Maharaja Pratap Singh in his turban as a token of love, respect and deep gratitude for entrusting him the Raj Gaddi of Jammu and Kashmir State, was the confluence of justice, liberalism, prudence and boldness.

Scintillating with his titles, he was the epitome of far-sighted vision, of judicious and progressive temperament because of his modern education, family values and traditions and upbringing by his father, Amar Singh.

In his early life, Maharaja Hari Singh was an avid polo player besides being a fine sportsman and a sharp-shooter holding several world records. "Later on, he took a keen interest in racing and this inevitably led him to Bombay which had the best racing in India"[10].

He was imbued with the sharpest and an equally analytical mind blended with indomitable and rare courage. The social stigma of poverty, superstitions, exploitation, persecution and fatal diseases had chained the agriculturists in its thraldom and Maharaja Bahadur wanted to awaken them from the sleepy dormancy of ignorance. He was born with an impassioned zeal and a mission to mitigate the socio-economic inequalities prevailing in the society and to alleviate the sufferings of the underprivileged classes irrespective of caste or community. For him service to humanity was service to God.

The socio-economic conditions of his subjects had remained pathetic and further deteriorated due to illiteracy and inadequate representation in the administrative machinery of the State because outsiders had consolidated

their iron grip over the superior posts since the times of Maharaja Pratap Singh when he effected a change in the court language from Persian to Urdu during the early years of his reign.[11] It was an uphill task for him to put the State on the right tracks of economic development.

He was a great visionary because he wanted to raise his people from the ghettoized life to which they had been catapulated and reduced to deplorable conditions that was only possible if his subjects were brought to bright daylight of hope and optimism. The horrendous job of amelioration was being done by no other person than the new entrant to the throne of the State through his sustained public welfare and liberal policies which reflected that the Maharaja himself was 'immensely interested in the socio-economic regeneration of his people'[12]. He personally came into close contact with their woes and steered them out of the complexities of their lives "who constantly lived in tyranny, hopelessness and fears of exploitation"[13]. His immediate high priority was innovative initiatives through immaculate planning and development projects to alleviate the lot of the depressed classes and to achieve prosperity for them so that they should enjoy the fruit of his good governance. His succession to the throne of Jammu and Kashmir heralded a sense of optimism among his people so that he would prove more effective than his predecessor[14].

Maharaja Pratap Singh instituted a plethora of reforms but they did not help the State to its full bloom because of the extreme British interference in the internal affairs of the administration. It was left to the credit of the new ruler to complete the unfinished job of reforms and to give the State a new look of modernity.

After solemnizing five marriages in different Rajput families, Amar Singh remained issueless when his elder brothers had been blessed with sons. This was the cause of his anxiety and anguish. He frequented the abodes of Sufis and saints and prayed frantically for a son. Once during a visit to his jagir in Bhaderwah in September 1894, he happened to meet a Sufi faqir who possessed charismatic powers[15]. People of all hues and colours flocked to him for boons and blessings. Amar Singh visited him and got attracted by his magnetic personality and he made it a point to see him regularly. One day the Godly figure asked Amar Singh the purpose of his visit. He told the

Sufi that Nature had blessed him with everything in abundance and only for blessings, he come to see him. The Sufi knew the internal feelings of the visitor and told him that he was not destined to become the father of a son. He mumbled something the content of which could not be perfectly understood. It was gathered from his whispers that he had to go for a new birth in order to fulfil the desire of his follower. After that the Sufi went into deep silence and meditations[16]. The next day when Amar Singh went to see him, to his surprise, the Sufi was not in his cottage.

After his mysterious disappearance from his cottage and the passage of about one year, Amar Singh was blessed with a son, Hari Singh, by his Rani Patiyali on September 23, 1895, on the ninth day of shradha rituals[17].

Immediately after the birth of Hari Singh, Amar Singh consulted the astrologer of Basohli (Pandit Visheshwar Dutt) to prepare his horoscope. The sage astrologer predicted that:

1. His rise to the Dogra dynasty would be meteoric.

2. He would be a crown figure and dominate the central stage of administration and authority.

3. He would outwit the world with his rare intellect and wisdom and would emerge as the leader of all the Indian Princely states.

Amar Singh dismissed the whole prophecy as wild because his older brothers Maharaja Pratap Singh and Raja Ram Singh had already been blessed with sons.

But the predictions by the sage astrologer proved true.

Amar Singh provided the best of facilities for the nourishment and upbringing of his son. At the age of three in 1898, Hari Singh’s mundane ceremony was performed with pomp, gaiety and royal glamour. A bevy of Indian and European teachers were employed for his early education. The services of a European female tutor were specially acquired to teach Hari Singh the English language and European etiquette which were considered

to be important for a growing prince. For his perfect and flawless diction, Hari Singh was profusely appreciated by his teacher, Mr. Steve.

Raja Amar Singh developed his own estate in mid 80s and built Amar Mahal-the mini castle – as his accommodation in the vicinity of Ram Nagar locality to keep his son and family away from the hot-bed of conspiracies, intrigues and contrivances of Durbar-Garh, then the centre of authority of the Ruling family. He wanted to protect his son from the adverse effects of DurbarGarh surroundings which might hamper the growth of his son.

Amar Mahal fitted with modern amenities was constructed under the supervision of a French architect who planned it in such a fashion that natural calamities could hardly affect its structure and till now it has stood the test of times.

Dr. Karan Singh, son of the late Maharaja Hari Singh and grandson of Raja Amar Singh, philosopher turned statesman, converted Amar Mahal into a museum consisting of huge paintings of his forefathers, rare Pahari paintings, a royal throne weighing one hundred kilos of gold with a proper golden canopy over it, a library of rare books and manuscripts. In a rare gesture of generosity and philanthropy he gifted it to the nation which was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, on April 13, 1975. It has become a centre of attraction for the tourists from the four corners of the country.

The relations between Maharaja Pratap Singh and his younger brother, Raja Amar Singh, had soured to serious dimensions regarding the succession to the throne of Jammu and Kashmir State. He adopted Jagat Dev Singh on the insistence of Maharani Charaki, the second son of Baldev Singh, the ruler of Poonch, to succeed him as the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir State and started supervising his nourishment under his own control. For the purpose of adoption Maharaja Pratap Singh sought permission from Lord Minto when he visited the State in 1907[18]. Maharaja Pratap Singh never wanted to pass on the control of the State to Amar Singh.

Amar Singh had the tacit support of the Resident Officer who thought that Hari Singh who had been systematically brought up and tutored by the Europeans would serve the British interest more than Jagat Dev Singh[19].

Thus the claim of adoption of Jagat Dev Singh was rejected and he was simply kept for the watery obesiquies of Maharaja Pratap Singh and thus would have no bearing on the question of succession to the throne[20]. Pratap Singh had to succumb to the mounting pressure of Amar Singh[21] who wielded tremendous influence in the administration.

After the sudden death of Amar Singh in 1908, all the feuds, rivalries and conflicts between the brothers regarding the ascendancy to the Dogra throne came to an abrupt end. Maharaja Pratap Singh started grooming and recognizing Hari Singh as his successor and accordingly informed the Government of British India[22]. Maharaja Pratap Singh was very keen and particular about Hari Singh's well being and took extreme care for his education. In 1908 at the age of thirteen, he was sent to Mayo College in Rajputana, Ajmer for his early education. After successfully completing his studies at Mayo College, Maharaja Pratap Singh "deputed Colonel Milkha Singh Raipuria Jamwal to train him initially in arms"[23] before sending him to Imperial Cadet corps, Dehradun for more advance training. In the meanwhile, Maharaja Pratap Singh "employed Major H.K. Barr as his guardian and he continued in this capacity till 1918 when the ruler-in-waiting attained his majority. The guardianship of the young prince was entrusted to another British officer, Captain Burge when Major Barr went on leave'[24].

After completing his course at Imperial Cadet corps at Dehradun in 1915, Maharaja Pratap Singh appointed his young nephew as the Commander-in-chief of the State Forces at the early age of twenty. This was in fact, a responsible duty on the young shoulders of Hari Singh in the administration. In this capacity, he reorganized the State Army on modern lines and introduced the system of direct commission for the officers[25]. He made the best arrangements for sending the contingents of State forces to foreign war contingents of State forces to foreign war 1918[25A].

In November 1919, Maharaja Bahadur sent his young nephew to Europe to train him in managing the affairs of the State so he might prove more effective for the State. During his maiden trip to England along with his secretary Mr. Mahboob, Hari Singh 'became the victim of a preplanned and deep-rooted conspiracy by a group of crooks planted by the Political

Department of the Government of India'[26]. Lord Birdwood in his book *Two Nations and Kashmir* describes Hari Singh 'as the victim of an unscrupulous attempt at blackmail in a big way and for a few days in December, 1919'. The case of Mr. 'A' was to monopolise the headlines of British newspapers". Sir John Simmons who later headed the Simmon Commission in the subcontinent in 1927, was his prosecution lawyer. John Gunther, in his book in *Inside Asia*, revealed the true identity of Hari Singh.

This scandal was intentionally hatched to humiliate Hari Singh in the eyes of the ruler and to debar his succession to the throne of Jammu and Kashmir State. There were ripples of anguish for the young prince and its rumblings had adverse effects on the uncle-nephew relations. But Maharaja Pratap Singh true to his commitment charged the Political Department to vilify the young prince and lodged a strong protest for the nasty treatment meted out to the heir-apparent. The young prince developed an intense hatred against the British as the nation of crooks and frauds but Hari Singh never denied his hospitality and recruitment to high positions in the State administration[28].

After petitions to the Viceroy in 1921, Maharaja Pratap Singh was restored his full powers which had been annexed in April 1889. A state council was formed to assist the Maharaja to conduct the business of administration and Hari Singh was appointed its Senior Member. In this capacity Raja Hari Singh came into close contact with the woes of the people and made an attempt to understand their problems.

'Unemployed educated young men of the state pleaded for help in driving out the non-state subjects after they had failed to get any responsible encouragement from the ruler. It was during his stint as the Senior Member of the council that he fulfilled the aspirations of his people and issued circulars to all Departments to employ only the State subjects to all ordinary vacancies'[29].

He won the confidence of his people by his zealous efforts to solve the chronic food problem when there was an acute shortage of food stocks in the valley in 1921-22[30]. It was the intelligent handling of this situation which averted a severe famine in the valley during this time[31] and earned

him applause. His commitment to his people and his communal impartiality secured for him the trust and confidence of his people.

31A

It was customary and coming from the times of Maharaja Gulab Singh to perfect the heir-apparent in the statecraft so he would be able to shoulder the responsibilities of the state effectively because Gulab Singh had seen the fate of the most powerful kingdom of Lahore completely disintegrated like a pack of cards in the event of neglecting the proper training to the heir-apparent in the affairs of the State.[32] Under the tutelage and astute statesmanship of Maharaja Pratap Singh, a decade of continued and constant association with his uncle from 1915 onwards when Hari Singh was appointed the Commander-in-chief of the State forces till the death of Maharaja Pratap Singh in September 1925, he was perfected into State affairs and "to act for himself in administrative problems independently".[33]

Hari Singh's landing at the prime slot was marked with turmoils and a series of tumultuous events which he faced stoically at the hands of the British Indian Government. Viceroy of India, Rufus Isaac Daniel Reading created ripples of anguish for the new entrant to the throne of Jammu and Kashmir State. The condolence telegram sent by Viceroy to Maharaja Hari Singh after the death of Maharaja Pratap Singh was addressed as 'Raja Hari Singh' which was strongly resented by the new ruler and considered it as an infringement on his right to succeed the throne.[34] The British Political Assistant to Resident supported the Maharaja's case by asking the Political Department to rectify this blunder promptly and another telegram be sent without losing any more time and duly addressed as 'His Highness Hari Singh'.[35] The future relations between the Kashmir State and the British Indian Government would be adversely affected if they did not change their strategy. It was a well-known practice 'that the British policy with regard to the ruling princes was to weaken them on each new succession'[36].

Hari Singh took strong exception to this attitude as there was no rival claimant to the throne. Hence there was no question of delaying his claim to the throne. This was a political tool to twist his arm employed by the Political Department to keep the Ruler under their pressure in granting their

liberal, unjust and unconstitutional demands'.[36A] S.J Glancy and first assistant to the Resident officer in a meeting at Simla with the Foreign and Political Secretary helped to resolve the matter amicably. Maharaja Hari Singh's accession to the throne of Jammu and Kashmir State was only confirmed after he agreed to acknowledge the established practice of non-interference in the frontier affairs.[37] The new ruler accepted the new arrangement with reluctance.

The mourning period of thirteen days was over by October 5, 1925 and the Viceroy sent him the "Khirata" on October 14 which was delivered through the State Residency containing the formal recognition of Maharaja Hari Singh's succession to the throne of Jammu and Kashmir[38] and recognized him the rightful successor of the State.[39]

7

In November 1925, Maharaja Hari Singh amended the Constitution of October 1924, promulgated by Maharaja Pratap Singh by a resolution in the Executive Council with new Constitutional provisions for the State Government[40]. There was basic similarity between the two Constitutions but in the newly amended Constitution, Maharaja Hari Singh had absolute control over the powers which were reserved for the personal control of the ruler under the Constitution of October 1924.[41] He also abolished the office of Senior Member of the council who used to preside over the meetings of the Council provided in the Constitution of October 1924[42] "The reserved subjects retained by Maharaja Hari Singh for his personal direction included were: Political Matters, Military. Salutes, Ceremonials, Frontier Affairs, Residency Correspondence, Khillats, Tombols, Vartans and Grants, Toshakhana, Game, Preservation, State Representatives, Baghi-Khanas, Stables, Boats, Motor-cars, Jagirs, Maufis, Devasthans and Dharmarth'.

The procedure for the administration of the Reserved subjects was defined by the new Constitutional Act of 1925. Matters pertaining to the Army were submitted to Maharaja Sahib for his commands by the Colonel-in-Command of the army Staff. D. K. Palat writes in his book *Jammu & Kashmir Arms, History of J&K Rifles* page 118: "In addition, an Army

Council with an Army Minister, Chief of the Military Staff and Colonel of the Staff was established. Colonel Rai Bahadur Janak Singh, the Revenue Minister was appointed the Army minister with the rank of Major- General and Lt. Colonel R.D. Alexander continued as the Chief of Military Staff". Subjects dealt with by the Foreign Department were submitted to Maharaja Hari Singh for his directions by the Foreign Secretary, Civil and Criminal appeals, petitions and cases for confirmation of death sentences or imprisonment for life were submitted to the ruler for his disposal by the Law Member"[43]

Maharaja Hari Singh wanted to maintain the mode of personal rule in running the administration which his predecessors had adopted. His efforts were to undo what the Political Department of the British Indian Government had coerced Maharaja Pratap Singh to do[44] The purpose behind promulgating the Constitutional provisions in November 1925 was to secure the centralization of authority in his person and to streamline the process of the State Government[45] His fight against the alien rule was on many fronts. The important mission before him after assuming the rulership was to release the State from the subordination of the British because he was a witness to the intrigues unleashed by them to relieve his uncle who had reduced him to the status of a rubber stamp ruler. Hari Singh engaged himself in consolidating his powers, he regained the glory of Dogra rulers through his individual efforts and to maintain his independence clear and free of any foreign effect. To quote Lt. Colonel Bhagwan Singh in his book *Political Conspiracies of Kashmir*, page 3:

"Maharaja Hari Singh took upon himself the uphill task of regaining the past authority of the ruler of the State. He asked the Resident in Srinagar to remove the Union Jack from the Residency building and when he failed to comply, Maharaja Hari Singh got it removed by sending a detachment of the State Force. This was a very hard-hitting and bold step by the Maharaja and it invited serious correspondence with the Political Department. As a result, the Resident was allowed to fly the Union Jack at Residency but he was prohibited from moving down to Jammu during winter and was asked to shift to Sialkot in British India.

‘As regards Gilgit Agency, though this institution could not be done away with, the British troops were replaced by the State Forces and thus the Maharaja’s writ ran better through the Deputy Commissioner at Gilgit.

‘Once in 1925, when the author happened to be at Gilgit, the British Resident was to fly airfield constructed five miles away from the Gilgit town. The Political Agent was to receive him at the aerodrome but the Deputy Commissioner Th. Chhatar Singh Charak was instructed by the Maharaja to receive the Resident at a point three and a half miles from the town and no further. The flight of the Resident was cancelled owing to bad weather at the last moment’.

In January, 1926, a committee was formed to accord a (civic) reception to Maharaja Bahadur on behalf of the Amar Kashatriya Sabha which was held in Aijaib Ghar (State’s present Legislature Assembly and Council are situated at this site). The President of the Sabha was Rao Bahadur Thakur Kartar Singh, the Chairman of the reception Committee was Ghansara Singh and its Secretary was Nanak Singh Jamwal under whose aegis all the arrangements were finalized for the grand reception. Besides Rajputs and functionaries of Amar Kashatriya Sabha, all other communities residing in the State enthusiastically participated in the reception with fervour and excitement. In response to the reception accorded to him, Hari Singh spoke:

“This Sabha was founded by my father, Shri Amar Singh Ji, in December 1905, to eradicate deep-rooted social malaises from the society with the zeal of a missionary. The social evils like child smoking and child marriage, widow remarriage, infanticide and prostitution should be eradicated from the society with full force”.

D.K Palat writes in his book, *Jammu and Kashmir, History of the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles* page 116:

“With the death of Maharaja Pratap Singh in September 1925, a benevolent and sympathetic rule came to end. The Maharaja’s popularity, accessibility and sense of Justice was widely acknowledged. He hesitated to entertain radical demands or overtrues for democratic government, the prosperity and peace of his reign provided a favourable climate for the development of the State”. Hari Singh assumed the rulership of the State but the Coronation

ceremony was held in February 1926 which was attended by the rulers of Princely States 'who poured in from across India as special invitees'[46] The Viceroy, Lord Reading, politely refused the invitation to attend the ceremony citing the reason that he was winding up after the expiry of his tenure in India. The Political Department of the Indian Government wanted to distance itself from Hari Singh at this moment till he showed more amenable behaviour[47].

On 25th February, the Coronation day, Hari Singh dressed in golden trimmed finery upon which splendid pearls, jewels and medals glinted, sat in a golden houda on the lavishly caparisoned royal elephant Jamna Das to reach the Raj Tilak[48] and his favourite horse, Zabardast, formed a part of this pageant. It was a great bonanza of festivities and entertainment for the subjects of the State. The Coronation ceremonies continued for eleven days, i.e. from February 14-24, 1926 which were performed according to ancient Hindu scriptures[49].

The royal procession started from Durbar Garh meandering through the spruced streets of Chowk Chabutra, Pacca Danga, Moti Bazar and finally reaching Raj Tilak Bhawan for the final ceremony of the Coronation to be followed by the cavalcade of rulers and nawabs for the occasion[50].

The coronation ceremony concluded when Puran Singh Sohalia, a descendant of Raja Nihal Singh of Akhnoor, applied the saffron paste on Hari Singh's forehead[51].

The Coronation Celebrations closed at the brilliantly decorated Grey Hall where the assembled jagirdars, nobles and high-ups in the administration took an oath of loyalty and allegiance before the new entrant and one by one walked up to the throne to offer nazars. The presence of a large gathering of distinguished guests on the occasion included the rulers and nawabs of Patiala, Porbander, Palampur, Dharmpur, Bharatpur, Kapurthala, Dholpur and Alwar, they were the witnesses to these glamorous ceremonies.

In his speech of acknowledgement to the assembled gathering 'which was blended with secular ideology and where he confirmed his mediocrity as an

orator’ he observed: [52]

“If I am considered worthy of governing this State then I will say that for me all communities, religions and races are equal. As a ruler I have no problem. All religions are mine and my religion is justice. It is possible that while dispensing justice I may commit mistakes. To err is human. One who says that he does not commit a mistake is not speaking the truth. Only God is free from error. My duty is to look at everyone with equality. I shall, as far as possible work with justice”.

On the occasion Maharaja Hari Singh announced Raj Tilak Boons for the benefit of his subjects which ran thus:

1. All royal coniferous trees growing in areas assessed to land revenue could thence forward be cut down by the landholders concerned and could be made use of by them, free of charge, provided that the timber was not disposed of by sale.

2. Such timber might in future be removed by the villagers concerned throughout the year, instead of during three months of the year only as allowed till then.

3. Facilities for technical education were to be extended to Baramulla, Anantnag, Leh, Kishtwar , Samba, Mirpur and Bhaderwah as soon as possible.

4. In villages where there was at that time no land entered as Shamilat Deh, or village common land; and where the common land in the vicinity of the village side was then entered as Khalsa, or State-owned, this land upto cent percent area of the cultivated land of the village, was thenceforth to be shown as Shamilat Deh and the villagers concerned were jointly to be granted the same rights there which they possessed in their own individual holdings.

5. Over and above, the normal programme, the following number of primary schools were to be started on this occasion: 50 in Jammu, 50 in Kashmir, Gilgit 10 and Ladhakh 10.

6. In order to assist villagers in providing buildings for use as primary schools, timber required for this purpose was in future to be granted from the State Forest Department, free of charge.

7. Travelling dispensaries were to be provided which should cover the farflung areas of the State, three in Jammu province and three in Kashmir province.

8. Until adequate arrangements had been made for the supply of drinking water in the arid areas a special allotment was to be included in the budget every year for this purpose.

9. The land of any landholder in a Bhayyachar estate, who died heirless, was to become Shamilat Deh and not Galwand. In villages other than Bhayyachar, when a landholder possessing proprietary or tenancy rights died without an heir under the then existing Galwand rules, the proprietary or tenancy rights, as the case might be, had hitter to reverted to the State and had been auctioned to the highest bidder irrespective of the village in which the later resided. In such a case thereafter only landholders of the village in which the rights were situated were, in the first instance to be allowed to bid for the rights in question and the rights concerned were to be transferred to the highest bidder.

10. The bridge over the Tawi River was to be widened and made broad enough to take traffic both ways.

11. A first class up-to-date hospital was to be built in Srinagar for the treatment of the patients of all classes and a similar one in Jammu with modern amenities.

Maharaja Hari Singh’s coronation ceremony marked the beginning of assuming his royal powers.

Soon after the coronation ceremonies and festivities were over, Maharaja Hari Singh made a whirlwind tour of the State to have a first hand assessment of the conditions of his subjects. The Maharaja came into close contact with the people who ‘lived in abject poverty and ignorance stalked the land. A large majority of the rural population was landless and

inevitably steeped in eternal and vast magnitude of agricultural indebtedness. Starvation, fatal diseases and exploitation by the moneylenders had a free-hand'[53]. It dawned on him that the basic cause of the economic servitude of the rural community was the economy of exploitation which made the farmer the victim of the moneylenders horrible antics. This realization convinced the Maharaja that if he wanted to transform their pathetic and depressive social economic conditions, it was imperative for him to dislodge the Sahukari system and to rescue the peasantry from the clutches of a 'puny tyrant and dictator-moneylenders'[54].

Maharaja Hari Singh embarked on a mission to have had speedy and fast paced progress and to achieve this strategy, he initiated development projects and reforms which were a launching pad to fulfil his goal of amelioration of the most neglected lot from their crushing poverty.

Causes of eternal indebtedness among the rural population, which formed a major chunk of the State, were the prodigal expenses which they incurred during ceremonies relating to birth, marriage, death, performance of death anniversaries, litigations and other religious rituals[55] The other reason was the forced labour which compelled the farmers "to remain out of their homes for months together"[56] leaving their crops to the vagaries of nature when the crops required their intense care.

In addition to this there was no marketing system for displaying their products and no financial agencies. The farmers had to depend on the unscrupulous village moneylenders and they charged exorbitant interest rates and had their own way for buying their products. All these factors added to their woes.

Once during these extensive tours when Maharaja Hari Singh was camping at Uri where in one day, he received one thousand petitions which "were all against an iniquitous system of usury"[56] Here again at this place another case of usury was brought before his notice. ' A cultivator had borrowed twelve annas from a Kashmiri Pandit moneylender to buy medicine for his sick father'[57] and a decree was passed against him for one hundred and eighteen rupees after three years. The Maharaja got furious at this unjust incident and called the Executive Council and Mr. Middleton, the

Settlement Commissioner at the Dak Bungalow. Mr. Middleton confirmed the universal prevalence of this usury system[58].

It was here at Uri that the Agriculturists Relief Regulation of July 1926 was drafted with utmost haste and care which was based on the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act of 1876 and which empowered the debtor to bring his creditor to the court for settlement of account[59]. Under this regulation maximum interest that could be charged by moneylenders from agriculturist debtors was 12 percent, provided the total interest charged did not exceed 50 per cent of the amount lent and if was found that 'excessive interest had been charged, the court could curtail the total amount and give the debtor a decree against his creditor'[60] This Regulation was 'passed by Maharaja Hari Singh when such enactments were not common in British India, not to speak of the Indian Princely States and he was himself the prime mover of this good legislation'[61] This Act was promulgated in an incredibly short time soon after assuming the rulership of the State. This Act 'applied to all persons earning their livelihood principally by agricultural, horticultural or pastoral pursuits and it included in its ambit agricultural labourers as well'.[62] P.N. Bazaz further explains its importance in his book *Inside Kashmir*, page 254: 'during B.J. Glancy's tenure of office as Minister in Maharaja's Council in Kashmir, he relieved the Kashmiri farmers' debt to the tune of about rupees seventeen lakhs distributed by decree in small instalments over a number of years. All rural debt had to be referred to the special 'Shali Benches' within a limited time after which it was considered null and void'.

The Relief Act of July 1926 released the agricultural community and rural economy from the ruthless exploitation by the moneylending class and gave them relief from the age-old malady of indebtedness. Moneylenders created a hype over this Act, sent lengthy memorials and deputations to the ruler but of no avail as he did not budge an inch form this daring Act because he wanted to fulfil the promise made at the time of the coronation that ' My religion is justice' He wanted to dispense justice to one and all. The povertystricken rural masses 'ceased to be the slaves of the moneylending class'[63]. The moneylenders suspended their activities for the time being and gradually revived it by advancing loans to the agriculturists to be dictated orally on their own terms and conditions. Maharaja Hari Singh became apprehensive of their vicious designs and 'to meet the challenge

successfully, he launched a movement of cooperative credit on a mass scale'.[64] He engaged the services of State Army officers to educate the rural masses in the principles of cooperative credit and its potentialities for their general relief because the administrative staff proved ineffective in implementing the Act. Within a small span of time 'a large network of cooperative credit societies were set up all over the State'[65] and they advanced loans to the rural population 'on very favourable and reasonable terms at their doorsteps'.[66] As time passed, the rural masses gradually got attracted to cooperative movement which made the brisk progress to facilitate the peasantry.

These societies subsequently rose from 926 in 1925 to 1418 in 1931; to 1468 in 1937; to 1491 in 1942. Their working capital during 1924-25, 1930-31, 1936-37 and 1941-42 was Rs. 14, 79, 187; Rs. 27, 36, 887; Rs. 28, 48, 200 and Rs. 24, 86, 708 respectively. And their total membership was 16,695; 24,724; 24,998 and 25,760[67]. He prioritized the thrust of reforms and fulfilled the legitimate aspirations of his people. Maharaja Hari Singh with one master stroke and rare nerve abolished the moneylending system and protected the peasantry from further degeneration. With the help of these credit societies, Maharaja Hari Singh achieved his battle against the well 'entrenched class of moneylenders in the State economy'[68] and he scripted a new history in the annals of cooperative movement in the State. One of the shahukars and co-religionists remarked that the new entrant to the seat of the Dogra dynasty had to repent for his generosity for giving too many facilities to the majority community. This proved prophetic when they rose in revolt in July 1931 against the Dogra rule.

In order to ensure that the legitimate grievances of the rural masses should receive proper attention, His Highness, Hari Singh, instituted the practice of annually inviting the agriculturists to a conference where they could personally acquaint the Maharaja with their requirements. He was the first ruler among the Indian Princely States who played a pivotal role in giving a settled life to the majority community of the State.

During the early years of his rule, Maharaja Hari Singh made vigorous efforts to reduce the schism among different Rajput communities. A novel and unique idea came to his mind. He started celebrating his birthday in a

big way by inviting his community members for dinners in front of Hari Niwas in Jammu for the sole object that the antipathy and biased feelings among them should be brought down to a point of zero level. He was a keen observer of human psychology and when he saw the disorder among the invitees jostling each other irrespective of status to sit beside His Highness, he abruptly stopped this practice.

He made other attempts to reform the opportunistic behaviour of his community but their vanities and inflated egos could not be satisfied. Still to infuse a reformative spirit among them, Maharaja Bahadur himself ploughed the ground of Ranbir Mahal before an assembled gathering to encourage the landowners to till the soil themselves'. Instead of applause from them, Maharaja earned their ire and they started nourishing unpalatable feelings towards the Maharaja and spoofed him.

In the early years of his reign, Maharaja Pratap Singh effected a change in the court language. The abrupt switch over to Urdu from Persian brought 'an influx of outsiders from Punjab, both Hindus and Muslims displacing the indigenous men'[68] which caused a wave of resentment among the state subjects. So a very large proportion of the superior appointments had necessarily to be filled in by the imported men[69] and the deployment of higher English education in the State created acute uneasiness which obviously subdued the employment chances of the locals in the administrative machinery. No significant results were achieved by the instructions issued by the authorities 'to this effect to bring the local people back into their own'.[70] Something constructive had to be done to safeguard the rights of the state-subjects.

'In 1922 at the instance of the present ruler who was then the Senior Member of the Council, a committee was appointed to define the term 'Hereditary State Subject' and to examine the entire gamut of naturalization. The Committee after exhaustive studies reported that the term 'Hereditary State Subject' should be held to mean and include that "all persons born and residing within the State before the commencement of the reign of the late Maharaja Gulab Singh and also persons who settled there before the commencement of Sambat 1942 and have been permanently residing there in'.

In January 1927 Maharaja Hari Singh accepted the definition proposed by the Committee and issued an order that no one be appointed to government's posts without his own express permission'[72] This immediately debarred non-state subjects from employment in the state'.[73] In order to secure the proper supply of trained state subjects for the superior services, Maharaja Hari Singh constituted a Scholarship Selection Board with a grant of one lakh of rupees annually to select scholars for professional training in British India and European countries.[74] The Selection Board was instructed to get from each Ministry 'a statement of the vacancies likely to occur within the next three years'.[75] Maharaja Hari Singh evolved a system, according to which the scholarships were to be divided equally between members of the Hindu and Muslim communities and thirty scholarships deputed to USA and BritishIndia before the second World War to be specialized in different professions as per the requirement of the ministries such as in Medicine, Civil Engineering, Higher legal education, training in Secretariat and Co-operative societies, accountancy, entomology sericulture, architecture, planning, veterinary science, horticulture, forestry, printing and public administration. The amount spent on scholarships between 1927 and March 1931, was Rs. 3,02,918 including Rs. 60,387 which was specially reserved for the Muslims through competitions 'but were set apart for them so that they would not be affected'.[77] The prerogative of his administration was to improve the socioeconomic conditions of the underprivileged classes of the society. For that Maharaja Hari Singh "granted special scholarships and accorded prefential treatment to these classes in government jobs. Seats were reserved for them in the local bodies and later in the Praja Sabha when it came into existence in October 1934"

It was reported to Maharaja Hari Singh that a sinister British move was at foot to make Kashmir a 'British Colony'. By promulgating the Act of Hereditary State Subject on April 20, 1927, Maharaja Hari Singh 'made it impossible for the Englishmen, their Indian henchmen and bureaucrats from Punjab, to own land or to do business or to secure employment inside the state at the cost of the statesubjects'[78] This move by the Maharaja put a complete full stop to the British game of giving employment to more Englishmen in the State Services and the dream of the Political Department to make Kashmir a permanent British colony came to an abrupt end thus

turning them sour against the ruler. In conclusion, “nonhereditary state subjects were debarred from acquiring immovable property in the State, selling or transferring it to other than the hereditary state subjects’.[79]

Infanticide

Maharaja Hari Singh wanted to eliminate the most inhuman social evil prevailing in Jammu region among the Hindus, especially the Rajput communities. The practice of infanticide was still prevailing when Maharaja Hari Singh ascended the throne of the State and on a study of this problem, the ruler found that the cause of this inhuman practice was economic servitude. The female children were considered inferior to male ones and were victims of ‘gene bias’. Female infanticide was confined to infants and “they were frequently poisoned at the time of their birth because expenditure of large sums during marriage ceremonies was one of the most potent causes responsible for the institution of female infanticide”.[80]

The Private Secretary’s memoranda of July 1926 to the Maharaja gave credence to the reports that the practice of female infanticide dominated the Hindu social life[81] and he further informed that ‘it was not easy for any government agency to check this menace’.[82] Maharaja Hari Singh constituted a Committee consisting of his Council Members –Major General, Janak Singh, G.E.C Wakefield, P.K Wattal and Thakur Kartar Singh to go into the issue and give its findings. The Committee recommended to take ‘stringent actions against those who indulged in this practice and found guilty of the crime.[83] The Maharaja took another measure to suppress this obnoxious practice. He created a special trust called Dhandevi Memorial Fund after the name of his first wife. Rajput girls to be benefited at the time of their marriages from the Dhandevi Memorial Kanya Fund were placed in three categories:

a. Orphan girls who had lost their parents, no one was there to help them.

b. The girls who had lost their fathers while their mothers were alive. c. The girls whose parents were alive but were under the poverty line. To a girl of class (a) upto rupees 200; and an acre of State land;

To a girl of class (b) upto rupees 150; To a girl of class (c) upto rupees 100;[84]

These measures discouraged the inhuman social evil of female infanticide and improved the status of women in the society. Through his sustained and consistent efforts he achieved incredible results. Maharaja Hari Singh was against the conservatism, social evils and superstitious among the underprivileged classes of the State and he strongly campaigned for the rights of women, including the rights of widows to remarry and to hold property.

In March 1927, Maharaja Hari Singh further amended the Constitution Act of November 1925 according to the provisions contained in it all the powers of the government were taken by the Maharaja under his personal control, the Council of Executive Members was abolished which was to be replaced by a Council of Ministers comprising six members. Sir Albion Bannerjee was appointed as the Foreign and Commerce Minister; Major General, Janak Singh Katoch as Army and Revenue Minister; Khan Bahadur Maulvi Nazir Ahmad as Home and Judicial Minister; Lala Tulsi Ram as Finance Minister; Mr. G.E.C Wakefield as Police and Public Works Minister and Mr. P.K Wattal as Ministerin-waiting.

The duty of the Minister-in-waiting was to serve as the link between the sovereign ruler of the State and his Ministers'.[84A] The Ministers were appointed by the Maharaja himself, they remained in office during his pleasure and the Council was presided over by the ruler himself by which the work of the government was to be determined and coordinated in a smooth manner[84B] The ministers were personally responsible to him and the Minister-in-Waiting was not entrusted with the work of any Department and he remained without a portfolio.[84C] Dr. Karan Singh writes about his style of governance in his book – *Heir Apparent* page 31: 'To run the administration more effectively Maharaja Hari Singh left largely to his carefully chosen Prime Minister and a small Council of Ministers mostly from outside the State. In fact, he enjoyed absolute powers, he conducted himself rather like a constitutional monarch and hardly ever interfered with the administration. In this way he was far in advance of most of his princely contemporaries in India'.

Keeping in view the British Indian Judicial system, Maharaja Hari Singh enacted the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution of 1928 the most important event of his reign[85]. The Adalat-ul-Alia functioning in the State from the times of Maharaja Ranbir Singh was replaced by a High Court which consisted of a Chief Justice and two puisne Judges appointed by the Maharaja. It was felt by Maharaja Hari Singh that unless the High Court was strengthened and relieved of its advisory duties, no improvement in the administration of justice was possible.[86] He wanted to delegate all powers and functions similar to those exercised by the High Courts in British India with a few reservations and restrictions.

Maharaja Pratap Singh had appointed a Committee of the Chief Minister, the Members for Commerce and Industry, the Revenue Member and the Judge, High Court to determine the composition, powers and functions of the High Court on October 29, 1921.[87] The members of the Committee formed for the purpose recommended a Bench of three Judges. The High Court was established on March 26, 1928 which consisted of a Chief Justice and two puisne Judges.

Before 1939, the Judges had no fixed tenure and held office at the pleasure of the Maharaja but under the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution Act of 1939, the Judges could hold office till the age of 55 unless one was removed from the office by the Maharaja on the grounds of misbehaviour or infirmity of mind or body. But when the Letters Patent were issued on August 28, 1943, the retirement age of the High Court Judges was raised to 65'.[88] The Judges of the High Court had to possess the qualifications and experience of their counterparts in British India'[89] It was the highest Court of Civil, Criminal and Revenue appeals and it had to keep a close watch on the functioning of the subordinate courts[90]

According to the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution Act of 1939, the Board of Judicial Advisors was set up to advise the Maharaja about the disposal of appeals, referred to him from the decisions of the High Court.[91] This Board discharged the functions in the State which were normally performed by the Privy Council in British India.[92] Maharaja Hari Singh was a torch bearer of secularism and justice to one and all irrespective of caste and religion, can be seen from the fact "that he amended the State law in 1936 in order to

remove the clause from the statute book under which capital punishment could not be awarded to Brahmins and Rajputs. He declared in unequivocal terms that all were equal before law and that punishment would be inflicted on all those found guilty.[93]

the Jammu and Kashmir High Court was inaugurated by Army Minister, MajorGeneral, Thakur Janak Singh Katoch, on April 27, 1928, who administered the oath ceremony to the Chief Justice (Sir Burjor Dalal) and two Judges at an impressive but brief function.[94] In his brief address to the elite and the select assembled gathering on the occasion, he said that 'the establishment of the High Court would be a milestone in the Judicial history of the State and the future generations would definitely be benefited by upgrading the judicial system in the State.[95]

Maharaja Hari Singh had married thrice in 1913, 1915 and in 1922, twice in the royal family of Saurashtra and once in the neighbouring hill State of Chamba to the daughter of Bhuri Singh, but his first wife had died with a child still in her womb and the other two marriages were childless.[96] He was apprehensive of the manouvres of the Political Department of the British Indian Government in case if he left no successor to the throne, 'the almighty Viceroy would invoke the notorious doctrine of lapse and annex the State[97] Thus he solemnized the fourth marriage for a male heir-apparent with Tara Devi, daughter of Beli Chand Katoch of Kangra in 1928 by whom Maharaja Hari Singh was blessed with a son on March 9, 1931, at Cannes. Maharaja Hari Singh had selected France 'because there the agents of the ubiquitous British Empire would not be able to operate'[98] and create undue complications for him. There was 'an almost delirious wave of enthusiasm among the people of the State'[99] at the birth of the Yuvraj and one seer of sugar (approximately 900 grams) was distributed per hearth in the State besides distributing sweets among the school children and they were asked to pray for the long life of the Prince'. The slaughter of animals, fishing and shooting were prohibited for three days from March 10-12 and were declared public holidays.[100] The official announcement of the Yuvraj Karan Singh's birth was made in Srinagar by the Army and Public Works Minister, Major General Janak Singh while in Jammu, this was done by Mr. Wakefield, one of the Maharaja's Ministers.[101]. On their arrival in Jammu on May 3, 1931, a rousing reception was given by the people of Jammu

when Maharaja Hari Singh and Her Highness Tara Devi passed through the town in an open horse carriage.[102]

During his rulership he did not lag behind in remodelling the Army administration and he carried through an important scheme of army reorganization and the outstanding features of this were recorded in a note issued by the State Government in 1928:

1. “The entire Army administration and commands have been remodelled.

2. The 3rd squadron of Cavalry has been raised and armed. The men for the 4th squadron are being enlisted and a full Cavalry Regiment will soon be in existence.

3. Mules of the best stamp have been provided for one battery, and the battery is fully armed and fit for service.

4. Two complete Infantry units have been trained in modern mechanical weapons, half of these units being raised by recruitment. Personnel equivalent to one whole service battalion has thus been raised, trained and passed fit for service.

5. Two more units have been trained in the use of mechanical weapons. The battalions are complete with all technical equipment.

6. An innovation that His Highness has introduced into the State Army is the employment as officers of young men of good social standing and possessing high academic qualifications.

7. Another very necessary measure of reform undertaken and carried out was the construction at an estimated cost of 23 lakhs of the new cantonment in Srinagar (opened in October 1926 which provided the troops with excellent quarters. This cantonment may legitimately claim to be a model of its kind by comparison with any other in India)”

[103]

Child Marriage

The pernicious evil of child marriage was in vogue in the State especially in the Jammu region. Some newspapers in the State started to voice their concern for the social reforms and advocated the removal of social evils like infant marriage, illicit traffic in women and untouchability which were eating the very vitals of the society.[104] A number of sabhas and societies showed their resentment against this evil and in their resolutions urged the Government to stamp out the child marriage.[105]

'Along with this, the representative meetings of the people called annually by the government emphasized the need of passing measures for the prevention of this malady'.[106] Maharaja Hari Singh after taking into confidence the sabhas and carrying the public opinion with him, enacted the Infant Marriage Prevention Regulation in 1928 (June 18) which prohibited the pernicious evil of child marriage.[107] Contents of the Regulation for Public information:

"Any person who causes the marriage of an infant girl or of an infant boy, or who knowingly aids and abets within the meaning of the Ranbir Dand Bidhi such a marriage, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees or with both".

"No marriage which takes place in contravention of any provision of this Regulation and for which penalty is provided in this Regulation shall be valid and legal for the purpose of conferring any right of succession or inheritance on the issue of such marriage".

"Magistrate of the First Class Category shall try any offence punishable under this salutary Regulation went a great way in eliminating child and incompatible marriages among the people of the State and brought lasting happiness to numberless families. Maharaja Hari Singh was one of the earliest rulers to pass a legislation in this field and the Sarda Act was passed in British India much later'.[108]

Again in the same year, i.e. 1928, Maharaja Hari Singh through another enactment called the Jammu and Kashmir Vaccination Regulation making vaccination against small pox compulsory all over the State. This fatal

disease was brought down in the State to a very great extent within a short span of time.[109]

Maharaja Hari Singh was the first ruler in India to establish T.B. hospitals in the State. Two properly staffed sanatoriums were established, one at Kud in Jammu region and the second one at Tangmarg in Kashmir province for the treatment of the patients suffering from this fatal disease.

The credit of introducing Western scientific treatment by allopathic synthetic drugs and surgery goes to the Christian missionaries[109A].

Maharaja Hari Singh enacted the Juvnile Smoking Regulation of July 8, 1929, which prohibited the children from the menace of smoking in a 'public place'. "Whoever sells or attempts to sell or to give a person actually and by appearance under the age of 16 years, except on the written order of the parent, guardian or employer of such a person any tobacco, shall be liable, on conviction before a Magistrate in the case of first conviction, to a fine not exceeding twenty rupees and in the case of second conviction to a fine not exceeding fifty rupees, and in the case of third and every subsequent conviction to a fine not exceeding one hundred rupees". He stepped up his campaign against the deep rooted maladies with the zeal of a missionary.

Education

Maharaja Hari Singh knew that education was the single largest determining factor of economic growth so he chalked out a comprehensive and detailed action plan to revamp the educational system in the State. He established a chain of educational institutes from primary to college education in order to impart quality education to the scholars belonging to all communities irrespective of caste or religion. In addition to this, the existing schools were upgraded and equipped with the latest necessary infrastructure.

Before the modern Eestern system of education was introduced in the State, the education was imparted by the Pandits and Maulvis in the indigenous institutions called pathshalas and maktabs generally housed in the mosques and temples.[110] The hectic literary activity received a boost during

Maharaja Ranbir Singh's regime when he personally took a keen interest to eradicate the illiteracy from the State.

Maharaja Pratap Singh was the first ruler who established one such school based on Western education in the very first year of his reign in 1885 and that was Ranbir High School in Jammu. Three categories of schools, i.e. Primary, Middle and High Schools sprouted in the State and High Schools prepared the scholars for the Matriculation examinations of the Punjab University Lahore to which these institutions were affiliated after Maharaja Ranbir Singh had denoted one lakh of rupees when this University started functioning in 1882.

Shri Pratap College was opened in Srinagar in 1905. The long felt need of the local population was fulfilled for which Kashmiris had sought the active support of Dr. Annie Besant who personally came to Srinagar to inaugurate it. The Prince of Wales College was opened to commemorate the visit of the Prince of Wales in Jammu in 1906.

To encourage technical education in the State, the government established Amar Singh Technical Institute in Srinagar in November 1923. Similarly another technical institute was inaugurated by Maharaja Pratap Singh in Jammu on may 29, 1924 which was affiliated to the City and Gwildes Institute of London. Arrangements for education in the frontier districts of Gilgit and Ladakh were expeditiously made for primary and middle education.

Indian Princely States were backward in female education and the same condition prevailed in Jammu and Kashmir State in the discrimination of female education. The scarcity of women teachers was a setback to female education. Hence efforts were made to remove this handicap. Mission schools and private sabhas helped the State to expand education, both male and female. Gurmat Kanya Pathshala was the first girls' school in Jammu City. The State Government did not lag behind and Government did not lag behind and 21.

Soon afterwards in 1930, Maharaja Hari Singh enacted the compulsory Primary Education Regulation which was made applicable with immediate effect in Jammu, Srinagar, Sopor, Mirpur and Udhampur. Under the

provisions of this Regulation, the guardians of all boys between 6 to 11 years were required to send their wards to attend schools and neglect to comply with this regulation was made an offence punishable with a fine.[111] To implement this Regulation strictly, school attendance committees were set up in different notified towns to take action against the erring guardians who prevented the attendance of their wards[112]. It was a unique way of popularizing education through personal contact and influence.

Within a short span of time the entire State was covered with primary schools and there was hardly any town or village with a population of over 500 which did not have a school.[113] 'The agricultural classes preferred to retain their children at home for cattle grazing, crop-watching and for sundry pursuits'.[114] 'Jabri Schools' were opened for them and they were given free books and stationery only to derive them out of their ignorance. The budget grant for education in 1907 was over rupees two lakhs but in 1931, the budget amount had been increased to nineteen and a half lakhs of rupees.[115]

To make the schools attractive for the Muslims of the valley, provisions were made in the budget to acquire the services of thirty-one Arabic teachers[116]. About 160 scholarships were sanctioned among the Sikh students of the Primary, Middle and High School of the State to encourage education in this community.[117]

To popularize the basic school education in the State, two basic schools were opened, one at Jammu and the second one at Batmallo in Srinagar. The State Government established two teacher training colleges in the late 19302, one each at Srinagar and Jammu to meet the increased demand for trained teachers in basic education.

"To make the education more broad based, an Educational Reorganization Committee was set up on June 27, 1938, under the aegis of K.G. Saiyidain with the avowed purpose to improve the prevailing socio-economic conditions of the people. The recommendations of the committee were: Introduction of basic education in which book learning was to be integrated with craft teaching.

Conversion of some primary schools into basic primary schools.
Use of Urdu as the medium of instructions. Extension of primary education to seven years instead of five years.

Bring primary education with in easy reach of the masses by opening as many schools as possible.

Providing universal, free and compulsory education all over the State.

And improvement of professional efficiency and status of teachers of all grades".[118]

The drive against illiteracy among the adults of the State was started in 1938 at the suggestion of K.G. Sayidain. There were four thousand adult literacy centres and about 55000 adults were being made literate in 1943. Maharaja Hari Singh paid special attention towards female education in the State by establishing female education under a deputy director.

Karan Singh Ji Intermediate College was opened in Mirpur on June 14, 1944 and another Intermediate Arts College was established in the Poonch Jagir in October, 1944. There being no separate college for women, the Prince of Wales College functioned as a co-educational institution till, when Maharani Tara Devi Mahila College, Jammu, a private institution was founded in June 1944 with the efforts of the Mahila Education Society led by Rai Bahadur Mulkh Raj Gandotra[119]. Thus the longstanding requirement of the Jammuites was fulfilled who wanted a separate college for girls and Her Highness Tara Devi denoted ten thousand rupees for this noble cause. The college started its work with immediate effect and was affiliated to the Punjab University Lahore[120]. The literacy level in 1931 in Jammu province was 49 per thousand as against 8 per cent in British India. But by 1941, the proportion of literates per thousand of population in this province had risen to 74 as against 70 in the Kashmir province and 31 per cent in the Frontier Districts, excluding the Gilgit Agency[121].

There were 20728 schools in 1945 compared to 706 in 1925 when he ascended the throne of Jammu and Kashmir State and thus there was revolutionary change brought out during the twenty years of his rule.

Maharaja Hari Singh has been accused of promoting and harbouring the Rajput community around him. Actually it was the other way around. A scrutiny of the administrative staff both civil and military list pertaining to 1930 would belie this accusation. The only Rajput in the State Council was the Army Minister, Maj. Gen, Janak Singh. The personal secretary to His Highness was Lt. Col. Nawab Khusro Jung while the Military Secretary was Captain M.W. Reed and Senior General Staff Officer at Army Headquarters was Rahmat Ullah Khan. Lt.Col. Khushal Khan was Artillery Commander and Captain Khuda Bakhash was Commandant, Jammu & Kashmir, Training School[1] .

Employment whether casual or permanent for every state-subject, road communications to give a boost to trade, medicare and education were the top priorities that Maharaja Hari Singh wanted to usher in rural and far-flung areas of the State. His focus was the integrated development hitherto unattempted in the remote areas.

He did not lag behind in ameliorating the wretched conditions of the Gaddis, Bakerwals, Changpas and Chopans living in remote and far-flung areas of the State and created avenues for their livelihood through small animal-rearing schemes. In this regard, he approached the British Government to lend the services of an expert to survey and to suggest methods in order to improve the indigenous sheep breeding and wool industry in the State. Prof. Alfred Barker, an expert on wool technology from Leeds University arrived in the State in 1931. A sheep breeding department was established in 1937with its headquarters at Banihal and big chunks of government pastures were allocated for this purpose around Banihal and at Reasi after proper surveys.[2]

Maharaja Hari Singh established a Publicity Department in the State in 1931 although he himself was shy of personal publicity. It was kept under the direct supervision of the Chief Secretary of the State, the Judge of the High Court and the Home Minister.[3] After independence, the publicity department was reorganized as the Jammu & Kashmir Information Department.[4]

Widow remarriage was considered a social taboo in the Hindu orthodox society and the young widows were subjected to incredible cruelties and thus they suffered tremendous uncertainties. Before 1925, the public opinion as well as the conservative forces strongly opposed widow remarriage[5]. Maharaja Hari Singh had to tread (act) very cautiously in this direction. Initially he was reluctant to take any harsh step because of the adverse reactions from the orthodox society. It was only after mobilizing public opinion that he introduced Hindu Widow Remarriage and Property Regulation of 1931 which gave liberty to the widows to remarry and removed the age old pernicious evil prevailing in the society [6.]

Maharaja Hari Singh encouraged widow remarriage, vehemently opposed the forced widowhood by the conservative Hindu society and explained the importance of the Regulation:

'In spite of the fact that a lot of change has come into Hindu Society and the majority of the Hindus feel that for a Hindu widow to remarry is right. Taking into consideration the fact that the world is becoming progressive and women in other parts of India are also advancing, it is my opinion that there should be no restriction on Hindu widows to remarry again. This widow remarriage would result in the benefit of the public'.

By implementing this law, Hindu widows got a respite as well as the enactment stemmed the menace of pushing young widows into prostitution. Maharaja Hari Singh gave a settled life to the women for which they had been deprived from times immemorial. Socio-religious organizations especially the Arya Samaj supported the cause of the Maharaja in eradicating this evil from the Hindu society.

In the absence of local newspapers in the State, those papers which had a wide circulation were **The Tribune, Milap and Pratap.** A few vernacular papers published from Lahore which tried to create social unrest in the State, were banned by the State administration. Jammu and Kashmir State had its first publication in Ranbir, an Urdu weekly which hit the newsstands on June 24,1924, is considered a red letter day in the history of journalism in Jammu & Kashmir[7.]

Maharaja Hari Singh was conscious of the brisk progress in British India where the Press had assumed a very significant role. He was for free expression of ideas but at the same time bound by the treaty commitments to the British permanently[8]. The Maharaja brought forth the **Press and**

Publications Act on April 25, 1932, to facilitate the publication of newspapers from both Srinagar and Jammu and provisions for the security of the Printing Press and newspapers were also modified.

10.

Immediately after the promulgation of this Act, **Paswaan** by Munshi Miraj-ud-Din Ahmed, started its publication on July 1, 1932. The **Hamdard** by Prem Nath Bazaz in collaboration with Sheikh Abdulla started publishing in August 1932, and came out with **Vitatsta** in October, 1932, an Urdu weekly from Srinagar. The same year the **Rehbar** was started by Ghulam Mohid-ud-Din. Later on Sheikh Abdullah founded **Khidmat** in 1934**. Chand,** an urdu weekly edited by Narsing Das Nargis, later on became a daily.

Among the other important papers were **Rattan** edited by Om Saraf, **Pukar,** a Hindi weekly by Balraj Puri, **Amar** by Shiv Ram Gupta, **Dogra Gazette** by Daya Krishan Girdhari, **Wattan** by Mohinder Singh, **Sudershan** by Vishwanath Kerni, **Desh Sewak** by Gopal Dutt Mengi**, Lok Sandesh** by R.S.Mukt, **Sher-e-Duggar** by D.C.Dewan, **Sach** by Raja Mohd Akbar from Mirpur, **Prabhat** by DayaNand Kapoor, Shanta Bharati's **Bharati, Usha** by Shakuntala Seth and **Deepak** by Bhagmal Sharma were the newspapers which had sprouted.

Maharaja Hari Singh did not believe in choking the freedom of the Press as it was his belief that healthy criticism of the government policies would serve as feedback to his administration to redress the grievances of his subjects. [11]

When Maharaja Hari Singh ascended the throne of Jammu & Kashmir State, there was only one Urdu weekly, *Ranbir* edited by social activist, Mulkh Raj Saraf and in June 1949, when he was forced to leave the State after appointing his son as the Regent, there were sixty-seven newspapers being published from the State.

Untouchability:

It was no wonder that the task of removing untouchability from the society was taken earnestly by like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekanand, Mahatma Phulley, B.R,. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi[12]. There was a strong movement for the abolition of untouchability in the Jammu region and the most significant agency was the Arya Samaj.

[13]

Maharaja Hari Singh was a crusader against the curse of untouchability because the Harijans were subjected to rigid restrictions and treated badly. They were not allowed to share water from the common wells nor were their wards allowed to study with the children of the upper class of society and the entry of the Harijans in the temples was banned. Social injustice meted out to the depressed classes was not to the norms of his rule.

On October 31, 1932, Maharaja Hari Singh made a formal proclamation by throwing open the doors of State Temples and places of worship to the Harijans. This enactment was vehemently opposed by the Chief Priest of Shri Raghunath Temple, Pt. Devraj Shastri, by tendering his resignation in protest against the entry of Harijans to the temples. Maharaja Hari Singh appointed his brother Pt. Balkrishna as the Chief Priest and went ahead with his reform rather than making any amendment in his Regulation.

This decision of the Maharaja earned for him the unprecedented credit of being the first ruler of a Princely State in India to take such a revolutionary step for the emancipation of the Harijans even before Gandhiji launched his movement in British India[14.]
As a first step towards discrimination in educational institutes, Maharaja Hari Singh declared that no distinction be made in government schools on the basis of any caste or community. Places of worship, government schools and public wells be shared equally by all communities irrespective of religion and creed. He issued orders to this effect that this Act be implemented strictly and if anybody found violating these orders be strongly dealt with.

Religious Toleration 1932.

Maharaja Hari Singh used to participate in the religious affairs of all faiths and made it a point to be at Gandhu Chhawni Mosque to share Idd greetings with his Muslim subjects till their prayers were over. He had a great regard for the religious sentiments of his communities like his predecessors who were in favour of religious liberty to his subjects.

Land Alientation Regulation of 1933.

The Land Alientation Regulation of 1933 was brought into force only to protect the tenants from being dispossessed of their holdings by the moneylenders.[15] The agricultural community of Jammu suffered from heavy debts owing to prodigal expenses on marriages and other religious ceremonies.[16] Litigation also compelled the peasantry to resort to reckless borrowing from the moneylenders. The influential State official machinery exploited the agricultural community in acquiring their fertile lands at throwaway prices[17]. The Land Alientation Regulation of 1933 was an improvement of the earlier Regulation of 1915 which banned the transfer of land in favour of non-state subjects and the maximum period of mortgage was fixed at 21 years after which the land had to be restored to the mortgager.[18.]

Suppression of Immortal Traffic in Women 1934.

The efforts of the Dogra Rulers to control the obnoxious practice of prostitution and traffic in women had not borne the desired results and after 1924, this evil had assumed dangerous proportions[19]. The Maharaja's government had 'appointed a Committee to suggest ways to eradicate it'. The Committee suggested a few measures to amend the existing laws, making them stricter in character to deter the traffickers.[20] The women from the upper regions of Reasi, Ramnagar, Basoholi, Kishtwar were sold in Punjab, Sindh, Rajputana and some other places in eastern India.[21.]Therefore, after a long period of ceaseless efforts, the first Legislative Assembly enacted "Regulation" for the suppression of brothels and immoral traffic in women in 1934.[22] This Regulation was specific in declaring that public prostitution was a sin and a grave offence. The

Maharaja issued orders that this enactment be determinedly implemented and brothels operating in Jammu Urdu bazaar and Kashmir were banned.

The Maharaja's government initiated welfare schemes and formative steps to alleviate the condition of the women by absorbing them in respectable families. For their rehabilitation, they were trained in handicrafts to make them economically independent and self-reliant.

Marketing Board: 1934

A marketing Board was established in 1934 to promote and to market the agricultural products of the State so the peasantry could be directly benefited.

Panchayat Act 1935

For overall rural development, expansion of education and to popularize the modern methods of cultivation, the Jammu & Kashmir Village Panchayat Regulation of 1935 was enacted to provide the necessary infrastructure for creation of panchayats with limited judicial powers. The first panchayats were established in 1936 and 1937. Later on the Panchayat department worked briskly but from 1942 onwards its progress slowed down

Era of Horticulture 1935-36

The era of horticulture got a boost in the

The era of horticulture got a boost in the 31, when E.Robertson, Agriculturae Officer, Tarnab Agriculture Station, Peshawar, was invited by the State Government to seek his expert advice for the development of fruit culture in the regions of the State.[23] Ganga Nath in his report submitted to the State Government in 1942 recommended the plantation of the modern varieties of seedless fruit plants and establishment of nurseries at every Tehsil of the Jammu Province.[24]

During 1935-36, the Agriculture Department maintained two nurseries in the Jammu Province, one at Udheywala and the second one at Batote[25.] By the year 1945 nurseries had been established at Pouni, Reasi, Ramnagar,

Udhampur and Mendhar with 5000 trees of apples, apricots, plums, litchis, almonds, guavas, limes and sweet limes.

Land Improvement Act: 1936

The basic aims of Aid to Agriculturists and Land Improvement Regulations of 1935 were to advance loans to the farmers by the Maharaja's government for agricultural improvements and general relief to their woes. The facilities provided to the peasantry were to bring the maximum wasteland for agricultural purposes[26] . This Regulation made the rural community selfreliant and ensured a fixed revenue to the State [27].

Capital Punishment: 1936

Maharaja Hari Singh was the fountain head of dispensing justice to all his subjects because his religion was justice. He was a just ruler confirmed from the fact that he amended the State Law in 1936 in order to remove the clause from the Statute book under which capital punishment could not be awarded to Brahmins and Rajputs[28]. He declared that no person was above law and capital punishment would be awarded to those found guilty of heinous crimes.

Roads, Buildings, Bridges

Maharaja Hari Singh's government constructed a network of roads for the connectivity to all important towns of the State. Based on these principal arteries of the traffic was a network of small roads to link the major towns[29]. Several lakhs were allocated in the State budgets to widen the Banihal Cart Road and Jhelum Valley Road which connected the State with British India.

Besides the Banihal Cart Road, a number of feeder roads were constructed to link the various parts of the State. Among them were: Jammu-Kathua road, AkhnoorHamirpur- Sidhra road and Katra-Suketer road. Fair weather road from Mirpur through Kotli to Rambari was constructed to link Mirpur district with the Poonch Jagir [31].

Akhnoor was connected to Bhimber, Mirpur, Kotli, Nowshera and Poonch in 1935 and the toppings of the roads were tarred for the smooth running of the vehicles. A fair weather road from Batote to Bhaderwah was constructed in the same year. Another road from Kathua to Basholi was thrown open to traffic in 1938. Still another road from Mirpur to Bhimber via Chapper was constructed for wheeled traffic.
The road from Srinagar to Ladakh was further metalled and tarred which was till then not concretized beyond Sonmarg. A new stretch of 300 kilometres from Bandipur to Gilgit was constructed for public convenience.

Bridges:

"The necessity of a bridge over the Chenab river at Akhnoor was highlighted by the Assessment Commissioner in his Assessment Report of the Akhnoor Tehsil in 1930. He recommended an early construction of a bridge over it in order to bring Buddhal, Poonch, Kotli, Rajouri, Hamirpur-Siddhar and Nowshera closer to Jammu. Two bridges, over the Chenab at Akhnoor and the other one over the Tawi in Jammu were built at the cost of eight lakhs. The bridge at Akhnoor was to have the largest unsupported span of 450 feet and this bridge was declared open for traffic by the State Home Minister on Maharaja Hari Singh's birthday which fell on September 21, 1935"[32]. A bridge on river Kishan Ganga was built in Muzaffarabad which had been washed away by the floods in 1929.

Buildings and Mahals

Maharaja Hari Singh was extremely averse to charity which bordered on hatred and he strongly believed in hard earned livelihood. His impassioned feeling was reflected in the Ashokan doctrine that **"He will hold himself responsible to God for the care of his people"** The ruler embarked on a mission of building large houses and Mahals in order to eradicate unemployment among the rural and urban masses of the State.

He built Ranbir Mahal in Jammu and Gulab mahal in Srinagar which was later converted into Oberoi Hotel for its scenic beauty. For his personal accommodation, he constructed Hari Niwas in Jammu, Tara Niwas at Chashma Shahi which now houses the State Governor, Tara Niwas at Udhampur for hunting purposes which was later on converted into a

temporary jail where Sheikh Abdullah was lodged after his arrest in August 1953. He built Karan Niwas for his son at Jammu, Talley Manzil at Srinagar, Hari Niwas in Srinagar which at present is the State Chief Minister's residence.

Hospitals

Medical facilities were upgraded in the State at all levels in order to provide the best medicare to his subjects. Sri Maharaja Gulab Singh Hospital was built in Jammu for which the foundation stone was laid by the Maharaja himself on May 6, 1940, and was inaugurated by him after its completion in 1943. The cost of the construction of the hospital was nine lakhs and it had the capacity for two hundred beds with eight ultra modern operation theatres.

Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital was built in Srinagar which was inaugurated by the Viceroy Wavell in 1946. Similarly a modern hospital was constructed at Mirpur district.

More than a hundred dispensaries were established in the State and trained graduates in medicine from Indian and foreign Universities were appointed as Medical Officers.

For TB patients, sanatoriums were established in both the capital cities of the State. To eliminate plague from the State, a comprehensive scheme was prepared. In the same way to control the menace of cholera, special programmes were initiated.

Postal and Telecommunication Services

Postal and Telecommunication services were further expanded during the reign of Maharaja Hari Singh. New postoffices were opened at Sri Pratap Singh Pura, Hill, Rattla Mangla, Sukh Chainpur and Jatla in Mirpur districts in 1933.

A sub-post office was inaugurated at Darbar Garh in Jammu on November 07, 1939. There was a postal division at Kashmir but the Jammu Province

was under the Sialkot postal division. By 1944, there were 126 post offices functioning in the State[33]

Considerable expansion of telegraph services were undertaken from 1925-1947. In 1924, the Indian government agreed to open telegraph offices at Chenani and Akhnoor subject to the conditions laid down in the Memorandum of Agreement for the interchange of messages between th Imperial Telegraph Department and the State Telegraph Departmnet[34.] Postal Offices functioning at Banihal and Kud were linked with telegraph services.

The expansion of telephone services were accelerated in the state during the 1930s. To establish a link with British India, a telephone trunk line was laid down from Jammu to Suchetgarh on April 28, 1932 and another trunk line from Srinagar to Jammu was opened on October 21,1935[35]. A metallic telephone circuit was established from Satwari exchange to Ranbir Singhpura and from Jammu to Banihal. Baramulla and Poonch were linked by a single line wire and a telephone exchange was set up in Baramulla in 1940. [36.]

A wireless station was established in the Jammu cantonment under the conditions laid down in the Memorandum of Agreement between the British India Government and the State Government Wireless Station was also installed at Nowshera, Mirpur, Kotli, Bhimber and Rajouri during the period from 1930-34[.36A].

The brisk development of means of communications and construction of roads was to give a boost to tourism and to interstate trade[37].

Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited 1938

The Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited was registered as a public company in the year 1938 and it commenced its banking transactions in July 1939. Its principal objective was to help develop trade and industry on sound lines in the State[38]. Only State subjects could be its shareholders, the Directors and its Chairman had to be elected. Public departments had to deposit their balance with the Bank. Government intervention was strictly confined to

protect the financial interest of the Bank and a Supervisory Board had to advise the Directorate for its functioning. In case of any emergency, the claims of general depositors and creditors on assets would have priority over those of the government.[39].

Act of Rum 1940

In 1940, through an Act Maharaja Hari Singh declared that nobody would accept “Rum” a certain amount of cash, cattle and land given by the bridegroom at the time of wedding. This practice was declared illegal and punishable under the new Regulation.

Polyandry among Buddhists-1941

Polyandry among the Buddhists of Ladakh had afflicted them which was against the social norms of a civilized society. The State Assembly passed in April 1941, a law abolishing polyandry once and for all.

Similarly Maharaja Hari Singh discouraged polygamy which was mainly practised in the hilly and backward areas by rich Hindus although not acceptable to any group of Hindu society[40].

First Industrial Township

The Resin and Turpentine factory was established in Mira Sahib, Jammu, in 1940 with a capital outlay of Rs.3.00 lakhs. It earned Rs.45,000/- as net revenue after working over a span of nine months. The Resin and Turpentine factory was constructed by my father Lala Kishan Chand Suri, during the tenure of Sir Peter Clutter Buck when he was serving the Chief Conservator of the Forest Department in the State. So Mira Sahib was the first industrial township established by the Maharaja in Jammu.

In order to promote the goods manufactured in the State, Industrial Museum and Sale Emporiums were established in both the capital cities of the State whereas the Emporium at Srinagar was opened in July,1941 and the other one at Jammu was started on May 2, 1942[41]. The aim for the establishment of these emporiums was not only to display the articles produced in the

State, but also to give wide publicity and to encourage the sale of goods produced in the various State industrial units [42.]

Incidents Leading to Riots

The first seeds of hatred between the two communities were sown by Mr.Beck, the Principal of the Anglo- Oriental College of Aligarh in 1893 when he organized the Mohammaden Defence Association with the prime object of preventing the Muslim community joining the Indian National Congress and thus he played a very significant role in a far-off land from his native place to help the Empire in distancing the bulk of the Muslims from the Hindus[43.]

Mr. Beck's great contribution lies in the fact that he enunciated the Two-Nation theory and the conversion of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan from a nationalist that he was during his earlier years to a staunch Muslim communalist in his later years[44.] The schism created between the two communities widened further with the passage of time to a point of no return. J. N. Dixit writes about the constitutional reforms in his book *India-Pakistan in War and Peace* page 352: "Separate electorates for Hindus and Muslims between 1909 and 1935 germinated the seeds not only of partition, but of political antagonism between the two communities. The all India Muslim League was founded soon after Curzon's dividing Bengal into two provinces consisting of Muslim and Hindu majorities. The Muslim League was founded by Aga Khan Sultan Mohammad Shah, the religious and socio-political leader of the Khoja Muslim Ismaili community. He along with Nawab Viqarul Mulk, founded the League on December 31, 1906 with active encouragement from the British Government. The main objectives of the League, as declared in its initial charter, were to promote loyalty to the British Government, to protect and advance the socio-political and economic interests of Indian Muslims, and lastly and ironically, to prevent feelings of hostility towards other communities. By the late 1920s, the Muslim League was expressing the aspirations of Muslims advocating the continuation of British rule in India, the separate representation of Muslims in the legislatures and the executive branches of the British Government (both at the centre and in the provinces) and an insistence that Muslims should find separate reserved representation in the entire administrative

structure of the Government of India and Indian armed services. In 1932-33, a young Indian Muslim student at Cambridge, Chaudhuri Rahmat Ali, had written his now-famous paper on the need for a separate homeland for Muslims. By the mid-1930s, prominent Muslim scholar, poet and literature Allama Iqbal, endorsed the idea of the creation of a "a Muslim India within the body politic of India". The Indian Muslims worked for the early implementation of the Minto-Morely Reforms which had advocated the separate electorates.

It was during the rule of Maharaja Hari Singh that Ahrar activities communalized the peaceful situation which led to bitterness between the Hindus and nonHindus. Some incidents vitiated the communal harmony of the State and widened the schism. Muslims started a vicious campaign of deliberate oppression inside the State and unleashed a move of vilification against the Dogra ruler[46.] Muslim flare-up that showed its ugly head in July, 1931 was financed and triggered by the British Indian Muslims whose interests in Kashmir were much beyond their concern than for the Kashmiri Muslims[47.]

The 1930s was the time when Indian nationalism was at its peak. The Indian National Congress was on the warpath demanding the complete freedom for India. The Civil- Disobediences Movement launched by the Congress had created a serious situation for the British Indian Government. Tory members held Mahatma Gandhi responsible for the "Poverty of Lancashire"**.** As partners in the mute alliance; the British were trying to pull out of the crisis with the help of the Muslim League whose interests clashed with the Indian National Congress"[48].

Being a man of strong will and indomitable courage the Maharaja carried out the development policies and reforms for the amelioration of his subjects in order to relieve them of their woes and sufferings. But these reforms for the betterment of his subjects became unpalatable to the British Indian Government who was averse to the rulers of the Princely States coming into direct contact with their subjects. The British rulers in India wanted that credit of reforms should go to the British Residents appointed in their respective states. The popularity of Maharaja Hari Singh for implementing the series of reforms became a thorn in their flesh because it

was against their norms of rule. The British pursued their diplomacy to secure their interests in the State by using the threat of direct intervention in the internal affairs of the State[49.]

The political department of the British Indian Government started hatching new plots to malign the ruler and to regain the complete control over the strategic areas of Gilgit when Maharaja Hari Singh demanded to abolish the Gilgit Agency and to hand over its control to him. It was in fact, a miscalculated move on his part and he failed to make headway in his demands[50]. Maharaja Hari Singh got respite from the trouble only when he himself withdrew his administrative machinery from there and handed over the control of Gilgit Wazarat to the British for a 60 year lease in 1935.

The First Indian Round Table Conference held in London afforded the British an opportunity to avenge the Maharaja for his patriotic speeches. His idea of a United Federal India proved to be a noose for him. As a result, a regular rebellion was organized inside the State taking advantage of the Maharaja's absence. The British authorities organized anti-Hindu riots in the State with the sole aim of discrediting the administration. The British employed in the State were in search of a henchman who could carry out their nefarious designs against the ruler. Sheikh Abdullah proved to be the most suitable choice for their plans as he was a frustrated educated young man besides being a 'rank fanatic communalist'. He became a tool in their hands and for that purpose he was paid regularly by Mr. Wakefield who used his services to create unrest inside the State[51].

Maharaja Hari Singh had to undergo the worst phase of turbulence created by the Political Department of the British Indian Government which functioned under the direct control of the Governor General.

To avenge their humiliation, the British established a Kashmir Muslim Conference with the nexus of leading Muslim leaders of Lahore and started a campaign of vilification against the Dogra ruler. The Kashmir Muslim Conference wanted to submit a memorial of demands to the Maharaja but he refused to meet the conference leaders on the ground that the representation had been made by the nonstate subjects who had no business to intervene in the internal affairs of the State. Secondly the Muslim

Conference had no right to disturb the harmony of the State especially when all State-subjects had free access to represent their grievances to him[52].

As decided by the Indian States Committee in 1928, Maharaja Hari Singh proceeded to England leaving behind a carefully chosen Council of Ministers to look after the affairs of the administration during his absence. He had established a Sri Pratap Military School in Jammu region on the pattern of King George military School of Serai Alamgir to impart Military training to the Rajput community and its admission was exclusively restricted to the same community[53]. Muslims of the State felt humiliated by the Maharaja's move because they felt that they had been considered inferior to other communities. The influential Jammuites and Kashmiri Pandits never cared for recruitment in the State Army as they preferred to be employed in the State administration[54]. This invoked protests and provocation from the Muslims of the State.

The Foreign and Political Minister in the Maharaja's Council of Ministers, Sir Albion Bannerji, got enraged and reacted sharply against this move by the ruler and resigned in retaliation on March 15, 1929, to damage the reputation of the ruler as this person had been planted by the Political Department to disturb the communal harmony of the State. He gave a very offensive interview to the **Daily Tribune** on March 19, 1929 wherein he blamed the Maharaja for his lackadaisical attitude towards the Kashmiri Muslims. The excerpt of the Interview:

"The State is labouring under many disadvantages with a very large Muslim population absolutely illiterate and practically governed like dumb driven cattle. There is no contact between the government and the people, no suitable opportunity for representing grievances and the administration itself required overhauling from top to bottom, It has at present little or no sympathy with people's grievances. There is hardly any public opinion in the State. As regards the Press, it is practically non-existent with the result that the people are not benefited to the extent they should be."

As a Minister in the Maharaja's Council for the last two years, Sir Albion Bannerji, never had the courage to pinpoint the sufferings of the Muslims in Kashmir. This interview served as the most strident to the Muslims inside

the State as well as to the Kashmir Muslim Conference of Lahore and the Conference sharpened its cudgels against the Hindu Dogra ruler[55.] 'The Muslim Vernacular Press of Lahore intensified its personal attack on the Maharaja and denounced the administrative machinery in what could be termed as an alarming virulent campaign against the Hindu administration'[56]. Leading newspapers published from Lahore**The Inquilab, Siyasat, Al Fazal, Al Aman, Sunrise, Eastern Times, Muslim Outlook, Zamindar, Light, Kashmir Mussalman, Kashmir Mazloom and Maktoob-e-Kashmir** created strong public opinion against the State by inciting the communal hatred and aroused the Muslims to revolt against the Maharaja even before they had presented their grievances to the ruler[57]. In addition to this they demanded that the administration of the State be taken over by the British Government. This scurrilous propaganda continued for about another year even though the Maharaja had returned to the State[58].

Dandi March

'This was the time when the relentless struggle for freedom by the Indian National Congress was at its zenith. After days of uncertainty and instability, Mahatma Gandhi in a letter to the Viceroy, wrote about the heavy dose of land revenue levied on the poor farmers and burden of salt taxes. He further informed the Viceroy about his intentions to embark on the Civil Disobedience Movement unless remedial steps were initiated to stop the discriminatory strategy adopted by the British Government.

Gandhiji launched the historic Dandi march on March 12,1930, that continued for 24 days. The first batch of seventy-nine satyagrahis were the active members of Sabarmati Ashram. The defiance of Salt laws became symbolic of the tremendous power of Satyagrah which Gandhiji wielded over the Disobedience Movement.

It was a non-violent strategy to enforse the law of the land. The British administration in panic arrested Mahatma Gandhi along with the prominent Congress leaders which gave momentum to the freedom struggle'. (In Jammu Jottings by Suren Phookun August 12, 2008.

The weekly **Ranbir,** edited by the social activist Mulkh Raj Saraf was banned by Mr. Wakefield by reporting the events of the Disobedience Movement of the Indian National Congress and the arrest of Gandhiji on May 06, 1930.

A session of the All India Kashmir Muslim Conference was held at Ludhiana in April 1929 where the Press Interview of Sir Albion Bannerji became the butt of derisive criticism and the vilest form of vituperation against the Maharaja[59]. Highly inflammatory and fiery speeches spewed venom against the Dogra ruler and tried to create disorder and unrest in the State.

A memorandum of grievances of Kashmir Muslims was presented to the Maharaja by General Samander Khan and Sheikh Abdul Aziz which pleaded that a suitable representation be given to the Muslims in the State administration. Maharaja Hari Singh referred this memorial to his Minister-in-waiting, Mr. P. K. Wattal, because the Maharaja was very particular that justice be given to his Muslim subjects[61.]

Mr. Wattal proposed that a Civil Service Recruitment Board be established in the State through which the Muslims be recruited in the State services upto fifty per cent. But before the Board could be established, Maharaja Hari Singh once again had to proceed to England in August 1930 to attend the First Indian Round Table Conference. He was the first ruler of Jammu & Kashmir State among the 560 rulers who strongly supported the cause of India's freedom at the Conference which was held in the House of Lords in London from November 12, 1930 to January 15, 1931. Maharaja Hari Singh, as the ViceChancellor of the Chamber of Princes endorsed the statement of Bikaner's Maharaja for an All India Federation[62]. The Conference was presided over by the British Crown in which the Maharaja declared that "**I am an Indian first and then a Maharaja".**

Reading Room Party

Mir Waiz Ahmed Ullah, the Chief Preacher of Kashmir, refrained from rising against the authority of the Maharaja's Government. After completing their studies at Aligarh, Sheikh Mohd Abdulla, Mohammed

Rajab, Qazi Saif-ud-Din and Ghulam Ahmed Mukhtar returned to Srinagar in April 1930. Their stay in Aligarh had convinced them that a mass movement could help them in solving their woes and secure for them their rights[63]. They organized themselves into a group called the Reading Room Party and represented the progressive elements among the Muslims and strongly opposed Ahmed Ullah's conservative outlook in politics [64].

Mohammed Rajab in coordination with Bashir Ahmed had started a small Reading Room in the house of Syed Ali Akbar in the absence of any political platform to discuss their day-to-day problems. The Reading Room Party provided much needed leadership to the Kashmiri Muslims who were in the throes of a struggle for freedom.

In March 1931, MirWaiz Ahmed Ullah died and the new mantle of waizship fell on Mir Waiz Yusuf Shah, who had received his religious education at Theological College at Deoband and was attracted to the Khilafat movement. He had also seen the progress of the freedom struggle in India and supported the cause of the Reading Room Party. He arranged large political meetings in the various mosques of Srinagar which were addressed by the young members of the Reading Room Party[65].

At Aligarh Muslim University, Sheikh Abdullah along with his comrades came into close contact with the Muslim organizations which were primarily guided from the hot-bed of the rabid Muslim communalism in India[66.] In 1929, League leaders, M.A. Jinnah, Maulana Mohammed Ali and Maulana Shakut Ali visited the University and left an inedible mark on their minds which was not obliterated till their return to Srinagar[67.] The movement launched by the Reading Room Party for the emancipation of Kashmir was tremendously helped by the presence of Mir Waiz Mohammed Yusuf Shah. Otherwise Sheikh Abdullah would ever have emerged as a political leader without his support to create a flutter inside the State. Mr. Wakefield kept a close tab on the activities of the Muslim Reading Room so he chose Sheikh Abdullah who had the potentiality to arouse religious frenzy.

First Round Table Conference

Maharaja Hari Singh attended the First Round Table Conference in the later part of 1930 where he delivered two fiery and bold speeches which sent shivers to the foundation of the British rule in India. He created flutters when he said that the Indian Princely States would join an "All India Federation" while replying to the inaugural address by His Majesty, the King Emperor, George V, Maharaja Hari Singh pleaded for an equality of status for the Indians in the British Commonwealth of Nations. The Maharaja said: "I **must express our deep gratitude to His Most Gracious Majesty for the cordial welcome tendered to us and I pray that providence may grant us the vision and the will to realize the hopes expressed in the inspiring words uttered this morning by our beloved Emperor." "This is the first occasion on which the Princes of India meet in person at a Conference Table along with the representatives of British India and His Majesty's Government to discuss the political future of India."**

"As Indians and loyal to the land where we derive our birth and infant nurture, we stand as solidly as the rest of our countrymen for our land's enjoyment of a position of honour and equality in the British Commonwealth of Nations".

" Neither England nor India can afford to see this Conference in failure. The task confronting this Conference is a gigantic one. Two years ago, speaking at a meeting of the Chamber of Princes, I said, with regard to certain activities in British India, that in my view, the Federation was a higher ideal than isolation. I feel deeply gratified at the progress which has been made with the scheme of an All-India Federation as worked out in the Report of the Federal Structure Sub-Committee. But ever since the idea of a Federation was taken up in this Conference, some surprise has been expressed in various quarters in India and in England at the willingness of the Princes to join an All-India Federation. It is said that the Princes have forced the pace and that in any case they should have opposed a Federation with British India."

'I have never disguised from my friends, my warm support of the idea of an AllIndia Federation".

“To my mind, there is today no alternative to the Federation as a policy for India and in according my warmest support to the scheme of the Federation before us. I am inspired by the hope that we are laying the foundations of a future for our country, more truly for future in accord with its genius and traditions with great potentialities for future development than is possible under any other scheme that we can think of today.”

“I bless this scheme of the Sankey Committee and that, so far as my State is concerned I will in the interest of the greater India, be ready to join such a Federation”.

The speech by the Maharaja served as a severe jolt to the British both in England as well as in India. For his patriotic views favouring an All-India Federation enraged the all powerful political department of the British Indian Government and in nexus with the Resident in Kashmir initiated sinister plans to teach the Maharaja a lesson[68]. A green signal was given to Mr. Wakefield, the Police Minister in the Maharaja’s Council, to prepare the grounds for his removal from the State.

Civil Service Recruitment Board

During 1930, the State Government established the Civil Service Recruitment Board for the sole purpose of recruiting the educated young men in government services[69]. It was a God-sent opportunity for Sheikh Abdullah to raise a hue and cry against the Board that was constituted to keep out the Muslims from the State services. This slogan was further picked up by the Reading Room Party promptly that it was a biased approach adopted by the State Government. The leaders of the Reading Room Party, Abdul Aziz Fazili and Sheikh Abdullah, represented their case to the State Cabinet. The Cabinet Committee formed to see the leaders of the Reading Room Party consisted of G.E.C. Wakefield (Chairman), Thakur Kartar Singh (Secretary), P.K. Wattal (Finance Minister) and Major-General, Janak Singh (Financial Advisor). During the course of the discussion with the leaders of the Reading Room Party, the State Cabinet Ministers did their best to explain the importance of the Recruitment Board and the necessity to establish it. The rules and regulations framed by the

Board were based on meritocracy and efficiency. Sheikh Abdullah did not possess the calibre to face the qualifications prescribed by the Board so he threatened the Cabinet Committee that if their demands were not met, it would lead to disaster[70]. The threat posed by the leaders hardened the attitude of the State Cabinet and they refused to be cowed down. They reiterated that the rules and regulations governing the recruitment Board could not be amended because of the whims of certain persons.

A formal reply was sent to the Reading Room Party on January 28, 1931, to this effect. This was the time when Maharaja Hari Singh was participating in the Round Table Conference. A meeting of the Executive Council of the Anjuman-ulIslam was organized which criticized the rules and regulations of the Recruitment Board. One of the speakers of the Council went to the extent of warning that if their grievances were not met adequately, they would make the movement more coercive.

A session of All-India Kashmir Conference was held in December 1930, under the aegis of Nawab of Dacca where a deputation was announced to seek an appointment with the State Cabinet to voice the so called demands of the Kashmiri Muslims[71.] The State Cabinet flatly refused to meet the deputation as it was from the non-state subjects. The vernacular press of Lahore gave full publicity to it and created discontent among the illiterate Muslim masses against the Ruler.

Sheikh Abdullah organized large meetings in various mosques and delivered fiery speeches highlighting the miserable plight of the Kashmiri Muslims. Communal tension reached to a flash point and it required a spark to explode [72.]

Taking advantage of Maharaja Hari Singh’s absence from the State, Mr. Wakefield hatched plans to dislodge him when the Dogra ruler was thrashing them with his rhetoric in their homeland. The Maharaja had been selected as one of the Delegation to represent the Native States in the First Indian Round Table Conference which had been boycotted by the Indian National Congress. The British wanted to shatter the clamour for a Federation in India and were fully confident that the representatives of the

Princely States would accept their ideology and oppose the independence in any form so vociferously demanded throughout India on January 26,1930[73].

The British owed the Indian Muslims the gratitude for their support at the first Round Table Conference as it was the Muslims who had bailed out the British from the awkward position that they had found themselves in when the Princes in a surprise move opted for an All-India Federation[74]. Sir Akbar Hyderi, Hyderabad's delegate to the Conference, suggested forming a Federation with a weak centre which nullified the Greater Federation of India being sought by the nationalists. Hyderi's suggestion was the brain child of the British themselves which proves that both were working in hand in glove with each other[75]. Quite naturally this concept had the support of Mohd Ali Jinnah of the Indian Muslim League[76.]

Mr. Wakefield did not limit his sinister plans to the Muslim Reading Room Party of Fetch Kadal in his battle against the Maharaja but aligned the communal organization of the Youg Men's Muslim Association of Jammu which had lately attended the All-India Kashmir Muslim Conference in Lahore in December 1930. He achieved success in his designs in bringing into close contact the two regional organizations to raise a revolt against the Dogra regime precisely to safeguard the interests of the Muslims. As a result, **the Daily Inquilab** published from Lahore was banned in the State as the administrative machinery had taken stringent action against **Siyasat** and **Muslim Outlook** in the preceding last few years.

The perpetrators of the anti-State activities under the active guidance of Mr. Wakefield was jolted out of their slumber when they received the news that the Maharaja was blessed with the heir-apparent at Cannes on March 9, 1931. The Resident in Kashmir got jittery over the spontaneous outburst of people's joy as it was neutralizing his disruptive designs which he had devised during the previous few months[77]. When a Reception Committee was formed under the Deputy Commissioner of Srinagar, Pt. Balkak Dhar, to celebrate the happy occasion, the resident applied devious tactics to scuttle the occasion.

The Reading Room Party raised objections on the selection of a Hindu Chairman of the Reception Committee as a great humiliation to the

Kashmiri Muslims. A separate Muslim Reception Committee was formed at the residence of Mir Maqbool Shah to welcome Maharaja Hari Singh on his arrival in the State. The maharaja got wind of the conditions prevailing in the State and refused the permission to both the Reception Committees to celebrate the occasion on his arrival in the State in May 1931[78.]

Severe communal riots erupted in Kanpur on March 24, 1931, after India's three great patriots, Sardar Bhagat Singh, Shri Rajguru and Shri Sukhdev were hanged in the Central Jail of Lahore. This holocaust was triggered by British District Magistrate of Kanpur, Mr. J.F.Sale, to divert the people's fury against the British administration in India[79]. The communal frenzy was engineered by the British to create estrangement between the two communities all over British India. The strategy of the Political Department of the British Indian Government was to create such types of disturbances inside the State in the near future.

Some incidents happened in the early 1930s which vitiated the quiet atmosphere of the State and ignited the flame of revolt against the ruler. When the Namaz prayers were over in Shalimar Garden on Eid Day which fell on April 29, 1931, Mufti Mohammed Ishaque was asked by the Sub-Inspector of Police, Babu Khem Chand, not to read the Khutba in which the Imam was describing Pharaoh and Moses as tyrants. The Imam was repeatedly told not to indulge in mudslinging on this purely religious occasion especially in view of the tense atmosphere prevailing in the State[80]. One Mir Hussain Baksh decried and protested the Sub-Inspector's intervention in their religious matters[81]. When the Inspector-General of Police, Col. Gandarb Singh came to know about this incident, he immediately suspended the Sub-Inspector from the service. The Young Men's Muslim Association of Jammu considered this action as insufficient and started a campaign of vilification against the Dogra ruler. The matter did not end here.

The Young Men's Association filed a regular suit against the Sub-Inspector and the proceedings lasted for one and a half months. Finally he was acquitted by the Magistrate but the Young Men's Association exploited his acquittal by arousing anti-Hindu sentiments against the Maharaja as desired by Mr. Wakefield, **"the highest of the high in the State administration**".

Another incident happened in village Dagore in Samba Tehsil, about twenty miles from Jammu, when the SubInspector of Dagore objected to the villagers from using the water of the local tank for ablution purposes. He apprehended it as a breach of peaceful atmosphere. After it was confirmed that this tank had been traditionally used for the purpose of ablutions, the Sub-Inspector allowed the local Muslims to continue the practice. The Muslims of Dagore village conveyed their anger to the Muslim Association of Jammu which magnified the situation beyond all proportions.

Still another incident took place on June 4, 1931, in the Jammu Central Jail which added more dimensions to the charged atmosphere. A police constable, Fazal Dad Khan, was reprimanded by the Head Constable, Balak Ram, for being late on duty. In the meantime, Sub-Inspector, Labhu Ram, rolled down his bedding which contained a copy of Panjsura. Fazal Dad Khan brought this incident to the notice of Young Men's Muslim Association of Jammu who gave it an exaggerated communal outlook throughout the State. Fazal Dad Khan made an excuse to avenge the Head Constable for disturbing him in his sleep. The **Kashmir Mussalman** of Lahore published a highly biased report blaming the Police officer for throwing the Panjsura on the ground. The anti-Hindu agitation initiated by the Young Men's Association of Jammu gripped the entire State without any deterrence.

Maharaja Hari Singh deputed Mr.Wakefield to enquire into the indiscriminate incident which came to be dubbed as the Tauheen-e-Quram incident. This was the opportunity which Mr.Wakefield had been desperately waiting for to exploit the tense situation. He assisted by Mistri Yakub Ali and Syed Altaf Shah came to the conclusion that no disrespect had been shown to the Holy Quran by the Hindu Police Officer as alleged by Fazal Dad Khan. Wakefield's strategy was to involve the Jammu Muslims to carry out the confrontational onslaught against the Dogra ruler as the enquiry process by Wakefield was an eyewash.

The vernacular papers published from Lahore distributed pamphlets in the form of newssheets by the Young Men's Muslim Association in Jammu region and by the Muslim Reading Room Party in Srinagar[82]. Mr. Wakefield serving as Political and Police Minister in the Maharaja's

Council took no notice of these pamphlets being freely distributed inside the State. It suited Wakefield's style of functioning and attitude of conspiring with the local residents to spread the communal virus in the State. Maharaja Hari Singh was kept in the dark about these nefarious designs which were carried out under the aegis of Mr. Wakefield when the thick clouds of organizing the uprising had surrounded the Maharaja. He was successful in camouflaging the entire charged atmosphere.

The Young Men's Muslim Association in Jammu printed a huge poster depicting the details of Jammu incidents in provocative language. It was dispatched to Sheikh Abdullah in Srinagar to be pasted all over the city. Sheikh Abdullah in a public meeting at Jama Masjid lambasted the Tauheen-e-Quran incident in Jammu and openly spewed venom and denounced the attitude of the administrative machinery. He painted the conditions of the Kashmiri Muslims as deplorable and incited them to overthrow the Kafir's regime[83].

The District Magistrate of Srinagar called a meeting of the prominent citizens which included Munshi Asadullah, Maulvi Rahim Shah Bande, Maulvi Sharif-ud-Din, Mir Maqbul Shah and Mirza Ghulam Mustafa to defuse the tense situation. To ease the tension, it was imperative to transfer Master Abdulla from Srinagar to Muzaffarabad. But Master Abdulla exploited the Muslim frenzy in his favour by tendering resignation in a well attended public meeting at Jama Masjid. The people assembled at the meeting hailed his resignation as a token of self-sacrifice and acclaimed Sheikh Abdullah as their leader.

Thursday of every week was a day when deputations and individuals could submit their grievances and complaints to the Maharaja without any prior appointment. Mr. Wakefield asked both Young Men's Muslim Association in Jammu and the Reading Room Party to submit their demands to the ruler. The strategy behind it was to shield the communal activities hatched by him against the Maharaja.

The Reading Room Party selected Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah, Mirwaiz Ahmed Ullah Hamdani, Khawja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai, Shahab-ud-din and Sheikh Abdulla while the Jammu Muslims chose Qazi Gauhar Rehman, Mistri Yakub Ali, Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas and Sheikh Abdul Majid to submit

their memorandum to Maharaja Hari Singh in the third week of June,1931[84.]

Before the two groups could submit their demands to the Maharaja an ugly incident took place which compounded the tense situation. A short statured Abdul Qadir made a hard-hitting speech in chaste Urdu in which he denounced the Hindus and the Hindu ruler. He said that Kashmiri Muslims were slaves of an administration which was completely averse to their religious sentiments and gave an assurance that the Indian Muslims were at their side in moments of crisis and exhorted them to fight for their legitimate rights. He warned the administration if it did not redress their grievances, the Muslims would retaliate with full force and accused the ruler of denying justice to his Muslim subjects. The part of Abdul Qadir's speech:

"The time has come when we should meet the forces by greater force to put an end to the tyrannies and brutalities to which you are subjected; nor will they solve the issue of disrespect to the Holy Quran to your satisfaction. You must rely on your strength and wage a relentless war against the opposition. Pointing his finger towards the Palace, he thundered, raise it to the ground."

This enterprising climber from the kitchen to the forum was apprehended in Khanquah-e-Mohalle mosque on June 25,1931, and charged before the Court with offences under Section 124-A (Treason) and 153-A of the Ranbir Penal Code [85].

The leaders of the Reading Room Party arranged a meeting in Jama Masjid against the authorities for arresting Abdul Qadir and Sheikh Abdullah asked the Kashmiris to be prepared for any kind of sacrifice for the cause of Islam[86]. The atmosphere was further got vitiated to such an extent that when the trial of Abdul Qadir opened in the session court of Pt. Kishan Lal Kitchlu, people in multitudes thronged the court to have a glimpse of Abdul Qadir[87.]

From July 6-9, whenever Abdul Qadir was brought to the court premises for trial and taken back to the judicial lock-up, the tempers of the assembled

crowd reached such a crescendo that a communal clash appeared to be imminent to the local authorities[88]. Mr. Wakefield was touching heights in creating a tense situation in the State when a volcano would explode. It was only then he informed the Maharaja about the gravity of the situation who had lately arrived from France after the birth of the Yuvraj. He found the political atmosphere quite contrary to what he had left behind. He made a fervent appeal to his subjects on July 9, 1931, that "**his religion was Justice"** and no discrimination would be allowed against any section of the society because his policies were guided by it.

Maharaja Hari Singh had started to act on his own. He announced it to his subjects through an appeal duly read over to a gathering of ten thousand assembled at Hazuri Bagh in Srinagar [89] on July 9, 1931:

"From time immemorial, all communities within the State are living in close harmony with each other and I used to take the greatest pride in the fact that we were happily free from all communal strife. I am greatly pained to see that, quite recently owing to external influences, a changed and regrettable attitude is observable in certain sections in the cities of Jammu and Srinagar. This is greatly to be deplored."

"Two unfortunate incidents which occurred recently in Jammu city and which could not by any stretch of the imagination be associated with any action or policy of my government and for which the responsibility rested solely on the persons involved, have been seized upon and widely misrepresented inside and outside the State so as to convey to those who are not in a position to know the true facts that the policy of my government is such that Islam is in danger."

"At the beginning of my rule, I announced to my people that my religion is justice. That announcement has guided all my public acts and policies and I shall always adhere to it. I have not made and will not permit any discrimination against any class of my people on grounds of religion. The humblest of my subjects have free and direct access to me and any grievances my people may have, can be submitted by them personally to me, subject to two fundamental conditions, viz.

a. that the political activities are confined within the law of the land , and
b. that no outside intervention is sought in any shape or form

“I have no desire whatever to suppress the legitimate request and voice of my people, whether expressed in writing or in speech. It is my intention to give effect to these views but I am unable to do so, as long as, communal tension exists for fear of aggravating it. Consequently the first essential is that the leaders of various communities should take action to stop all political activities tending to prevent the reestablishment of friendly relations between them. As soon as it is reported to me that any community has faithfully responded to my desire, I shall be prepared to receive and consider most sympathetically any representation that community may desire to submit to me.”

“I particularly wish to refer in this connection to a very malicious rumour now being spread that cow-killing is shortly going to be permitted. This malicious rumour has no foundation whatsoever and it has given me great pleasure to receive from Muslim subjects spontaneous condemnation of such a situation.”

“In regard to recruitment for the State services prior consideration is and shall always be given to the public interest and the obligation of maintaining the efficiency of the administration at the highest possible level can never be overlooked subject to these conditions, the policy governing the recruitment will be such that no class or community shall gain undue prominence in any branch of the public service and that adequate representation is secured to duly qualified hereditary State subjects from all classes and community of my people.”

“I cannot allow my government to be coerced by threats into unjust action and it is my duty to protect the law abiding sections of my people from any encroachment on their lawful rights.”

“The immediate burden of maintaining law and order necessarily falls on the Magistracy and the police whose duty, it will be to see that the law is upheld at all costs. It is the duty of the police to act impartially and with calm judgement in such emergencies and I wish to assure them that they

will be supported by myself and my government to discharge their duties and will not be sacrificed to unjust clamour or intrigue."

"It is my duty to maintain the progressive character of my administration. But this end is defeated by unjustifiable outside intervention which has, within the last few weeks, done nothing but immense harm to the true interests of you all. I pray to God that you will receive the light of truth and wisdom and that you will live peacefully and happily with one another as before."

The Maharaja's speech in the frayed atmosphere proved ineffective and emboldened the perpetrators of turbulence who stepped up the criticism against the administration. The Muslim agitators alleged that the Maharaja had hit them under the belt by laying stress on meritocracy in recruitment to State Public Services. Mr Wakefield's efforts had proved more effective in formenting trouble for the Maharaja.

Trial of Abdul Qadir

The Session Judge became convinced that to hold the trial of Abdul Qadir in the open court was practically impossible. The Chief Justice of the High Court, Mr. Burjor Dalal, ordered that the trial should be held within the precincts of the central jail in order to avert distraction and public demonstration[90.] Mr. Wakefield leaked this confidential order to the leaders of the Reading Room Party when it was sent to him for compliance[91.] By July 12, it was known to everyone that the trial of Abdul Qadir would be held inside the Srinagar Central Jail and no outsider would be allowed to attend the legal proceedings.

A meeting was held in the evening of July 12, 1931, in Gaukadal mosque where Sheikh Abdulla delivered a very fiery speech which further aggravated the worst situation. A message was spread all over Srinagar that the maximum number of people should assemble at the Jail gate to protest against the trial where the fate of Abdul Qadir was to be decided.

On July 13, 1931, as the Session Judge entered the Central Jail, a mammoth crowd surged at the jail gate and made an attempt to get inside the jail premises. At the suggestion of the Judge, two Muslim defence counsels

representing the accused appealed the unruly mob to get out of the jail precincts[93]. The situation outside the jail gate became extremely grave so the police had to be called to handle the situation. The Session Judge, Pt. Kishan Lal Kitchlu, asked the jailor, L. Karamchand to inform the District Magistrate and Deputy Inspector General of Police about the grave situation. Mr. Thappa, the Superintendent of police was the first person who arrived at the scene of strife.

“Finding that there was no possibility of ingress; the crowd started stoning the officials and set fire to the police lives”[94]. All the efforts to pacify the unruly mob proved futile because there was complete commotion outside the jail. As a result of chaos and lawlessness prevailing outside the jail, firing had to be ordered by the District Magistrate which claimed twentytwo people killed and forty people sustained serious injuries.

“Another section of miscreants proceeded towards Maharajganj, a business locality, loot over an extensive area followed. From Bohrikadal to Alikadal – a long stretch – the Hindu shops were raided. Other localities too formed the centres of loot. Bazaar streets were littered with property, books of accounts were burnt, the Hindu shopkeepers were molested, in short, pandemonium prevailed. Mr. Wakefield confirmed that the articles were so strewn about the roads that his car could not pass, it is also his testimony that not a single Muslim complained to him about his premises having been invaded by the looters”[95].

An orgy of violence combined with mayhem, barbarism, riots and bloodshed engulfed the Vicharnag locality which was inhabited by the minority community. The anarchy completely reigned all over Vicharnag for about three hours till Colonel Nawab Khusro Jung reached Maharajranj Bazar in Vicharganj after the loot with a contingent of palace guards. He confirmed that Hindu shops had been targeted a short time before he arrived at the scene of destruction. Untold atrocities had ravaged the area, turning the Kashmiri Pandits into paupers while their women had to undergo the worst possible cruelties[96.]

The Principal of the Christan Mission High School, Mr. Eric Biscoe, saw the looting going beyond Maharajganj in a small alley leading towards

Alikadal. Brigadier Sutherland, Chief of the State Forces, closed the road leading to Jama Masjid by deploying the armed soldiers so the riots should not escalate to other areas. Colonel Omkar Singh was deputed to control the rioters with force.
The brutalities unleashed by Sheikh Abdulla and his cohorts were the brain child of Mr. Wakefield aided and abetted by the Political Department of the British Indian Government.

The Muslim uprising in Srinagar was a rude shock to Maharaja Hari Singh as he realized the gravity of the riots was nothing short of an organized rebellion. He decided to deal with the worst situation firmly but could not see the handiwork of the British conspiracy in this holocaust.

For instigating the Kashmiri mobs to raise the rebellion against the ruler and for delivering incendiary speeches, Sheikh Abdullah along with Ghulam Nabi Gaikar and Abdul Rahim were taken into custody.

A hartal was observed in all the prominent towns of Kashmir in protest against the arrest of several leading leaders.

The Political and Police Minister, Mr.Wakefield, was not at home nor was he available on the telephone on that black day. It was reported that he was with the British Resident to share the strategy contrived by him in league with the Resident which had worked perfectly.

Consequent to these events, martial law was imposed in the city to restore peace and harmony in order to control the rebellion from further explosion.

To fuse the tension and to punish the guilty was the idea for constituting an Enquiry Commission. The participants were feeling afraid of being exposed and they showed blinkered apathy. The Maharaja constituted the Commission to reach out the startling facts to salvage the State from crisis and to save it from further escalation. The person involved in triggering the violence with the active collusion of the Police Minister tried their utmost to scuttle the whole affair.
The resignation of the non-official Muslim members of the Enquiry Commission, Saad-ud-Din Shawl and Khawja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai, on

July 19, was a signal for the Maharaja that they were trying to sabotage the process of enquiry.

So on July 27, 1931, Maharaja Hari Singh ordered that the official and non-official members of the Enquiry Commission appointed on July 14, 1931, be dissolved and the official enquiry be held by the Chief Justice along with the other two Judges of the High Court[97].

The Commission was instructed to enquire and report on:

1. The circumstances which led to the recent disturbances at the Central Jail, in Maharajganj and other localities in Srinagar city;

2. The sufficiency or otherwise the action taken to anticipate and to deal with the disturbances;

The Commission was directed to make recommendations for:
a. Restoring of communal harmony and peace as quickly as possible and; b. The prevention of such a deplorable situation in future.

"Incredibly enough, some English newspapers in British India, joined in the denunciation of the Kashmir Government Honourable and fair-minded journalism circulated false reports without even investigating the chain of events and accused the Hindu administration for the 'butchery' and 'massacre' of the innocent people. The lead of the self-same newssheets which these self-righteous journals used to stigmatize as constituting the **'Gutter Press'** was enthusiastically approved and followed. In the annals of Journalism in British India, there has been nothing so disgraceful, so stultifying, so utterly bereft of decency as the gleeful and unjustifiable attempt made by certain newspapers to traduce the Kashmir administration"[98] .

By throwing all the journalistic etiquette to the winds, the Anglo-Indian Press had served the imperial interests in India. In order to counteract **'the poisonous vendetta'** against the State Government, the administration considered it necessary to issue on July 28, 1931, a communiqué based on the authoritative official reports:

“Several conflicting reports have appeared in the press regarding the serious rioting which took place in Srinagar on July 13, 1931. Soon after the occurrence, His Highness’s Government appointed a Commission of Enquiry consisting of Sir Barjor Dalal, Chief Justice as Chairman and two Judges of the High Court. Two Hindu non-officials and two Muslim non-officials from among the leaders nominated by their communities as members to investigate the causes of the disturbances.”

“His Highness’s Government expecting a speedy report, was advised to defer publishing a communiqué till the Commission was in a position to make a statement of facts on the basis of the evidence presented before it. The Muslim non-official members however, resigned their seats and the Commission’s work has been delayed. In these circumstances, His Highness’s Government considers it necessary to publish such facts as have been reported by the executive officers and ascertained from various sources”.

“At midday on July 13, 1931, a crowd of about 25,000 people assembled outside the jail and stormed the jail gate with the object of rescuing a prisoner who was being tried under Section 124-A and 153-A for rendition and for making an inflammatory speech intended to create hatred between the two communities. They rushed to the outer gate and overpowered the guard. The police arrested four persons but this infuriated the mob who started pelting the police force with stones and brickbats and set free the four prisoners who were escorted to the jail.”

“The quarters of the jail guard were set on fire and telephone lines were cut. It was feared that all the prisoners of the jail would escape. Attempts were made by some of the prisoners to snatch the rifles from the armed police, a few of whom had been seriously wounded by the mob. A lathi charge was made but it proved ineffective. Therefore, a warning was given to the crowd by the District Magistrate and the Deputy Inspector General of Police, who had been summoned by telephone before the wires were cut, that the fire would be opened if the unlawful assembly did not disburse but the mob continued the onslaught.”

“The police was then ordered to fire. They fired first in the air but with no effect and then at close range at the mob. More arrests were made

thereafter. The rioters then receded and waited at a distance in two sections, one in Hari Parbat and the other in a lane. Another collection of Muslims went in the meantime to Vicharnag which is situated about five miles from Srinagar. A third proceeded towards the city".

"The Vicharnag party perpetrated untold atrocities on the people by violence, pillage, arson and brutal assaults and indescribable outrages. They are said to have looted all Hindu shops between Buherakadal and Safakadal, including the important market of Maharajganj were looted and the occupants wounded".

"Military forces were sent to the city at once and they dispersed the crowd at Maharajganj. The pillage was stopped but stray assaults with sticks, stones and brick bats on Hindu passers-by continued. At places the mob assaulted military pickets who had to fire in self-defence".

'Military patrols were established and the situation was taken in hand. Altogether 336 rioters were arrested. Of these, 217 were released on bail for want of sufficient evidence'.

"Conditions in the city are improving but reports are being received which go to show that agitators have been busy in the mufassil. Most of the Muslim shopkeepers of the city and towns outside are still observing a hartal. Cases of forcible conversion of Hindus accompanied by cruelty, have come to notice from the Mufassil. Some scuffles between the Hindus and Muslims took place on the day following the riot and complaints have been received that some Muslim shops were looted, although such of them as were enquired, into by a high European officer turned out to be unfounded'.

'The latest event is the burning of the wooden bridge over the river at Sangam which appears to be the outcome of a wellplanned affair. Suitable measures are being adopted by His Highness's Government to prevent further outrages, Reliable Hindu and Muslim officers have been deputed to make enquiries into offences committed and their work is being supervised by the higher authorities. It is hoped that peaceful conditions will be restored soon. Warnings have been issued to all peaceful citizens to dissociate themselves from those who have disturbed or are disturbing the public peace".

Maharaja Hari Singh offered an opportunity to his Muslim subjects to present their grievances on August 15, 1931. A representation by the leaders of the Muslim Reading Room Party through a memorandum criticized the administrative machinery of the State but contained no demands.

The Enquiry Commission appointed by the ruler examined the Ministers of the Council and other senior officers to arrive at the truth. Thakur Kartar Singh, Deputy Revenue Minister and a Secretary of the State Council, deputed by Maharaja Hari Singh on the eve of his departure for London to attend the First Indian Round Table Conference, gave the details of the riots contrived by Mr. Wakefield with the active nexus of Muslims inside and outside the State:

“Ever since the agitation started inside the State during the Maharaja’s absence in Europe, I began to find out who were at the bottom of it. I enquired from Muslim friends, Col. Ghulam Ali, a retired military officer, informed me that Khalifa Abdul Rahim and Abdul Majid, both clerks of the Cooperative Department were at the bottom of it and they were being supported by a senior officer and this information was later corroborated by General Samandar Khan. Col. Ghulam Ali told me that Abdul Rahim and Abdul Majid were supplying the information to the *Inquilab* and they were both backed by some higher authority’.

“I brought the objectionable articles published in the *Inquilab* to the notice of Mr. Wakefield several times in the presence of Janak Singh. Mr. Wakefield told me that he could take no action without sufficient material. The substance of this conversation appeared in the next issue of the *Inquilab* in a most offensive manner”.

‘Abdul Majid was a great favourite of Khan Bahadur Abdul Majid Khan. Rafi-ud-Din, Superintendent of the veterinary department told me that the Khan Bahadur treated the clerk as his own son and in case he was dismissed for taking part in the propaganda, he had been promised a better job in Punjab by the Khan Bahadur. This clerk had bad antecedents, his salary was liable to monthly deductions on account of some embezzlement. He was still selected as the camp clerk and was taken out on tours. Wakefield would

have stopped all the mischief which he was doing but no action was taken against him'.

"Ch. Ram Chand, Deputy Inspector General of State Police, told me that Abdul Rahim had dissuaded Abdul Majid from taking proper action in relation to a meeting of the Young Men's Muslim Association. But Mr. Wakefield never enquired from Ch. Ram Chand and took no action against Abdul Rahim".

'When Mr. Wakefield was at Jammu in connection with the Tauheen-a-Quran incident enquiry, Rahim-ud-Din told me that Superintendent of the Fire Brigade was asked by Mr. Wakefield on the telephone to get five days casual leave for Abdul Majid and to proceed to Lahore via Rawalpindi picking up Abdul Rahim on his way at Wazirabad. The instructions were to stop the propaganda in the *Inquilab* for the time being. Rafi-ud-Din told me later on that these instructions were cancelled and the clerk Abdul Majid did not go to Lahore".

'Later, an article appeared in the *Prince India* exposing a plot to implicate prominent Hindu officials as revolutionaries'.

'Maulvi Ziauddin of Poonch once again came to see me and told me that Wakefield was instigating this propaganda through Khan Bahadur Abdul Majid Khan and Pir Hissamuddin of Muzaffarabad. He spoke to the Inspector General of Police to the same effect and both of us tried to obtain the documents mentioned by Ziauddin. After a few days, he brought two persons, one of whom was a Muslim, Barkat Ali, residing in Chenani House at Jammu and practising as a Unani Hakim and the other was Fateh Hussain Siddiqui, a Dafadar clerk in the Jammu and Kashmir Body Guard cavalry. I was told that the papers were in the possession of these two persons which they had taken out of the attaché case of Pir Hissamuddin. I promised them rewards in case the documents contained useful information. They along with Ziauddin brought the papers to me and said that these were in the handwriting of Pir Hissamuddin and were prepared to implicate General Janak Singh, Mr. Wattal, Colonel Ghansara Singh, myself and others. There is another document in the handwriting of Hissamuddin which was given to me by the Inspector General of Police which I produce herewith'.

‘The proscription of the *Inquilab* was a severe blow to the agitators. The writings of this paper were so mischievous that even the Maharaja enquired from Europe more than once when cuttings from newspapers were submitted to him, why this paper had not been proscribed till then. The enclosed letter from Taj Din, head assistant in the Governor’s Jammu office, will also show how these officials participated in this movement’.

‘One of the Jammu representatives, Sheikh Abdul Hamid, agreed to answer my questions on oath that the agitation was the result of the connivance of Mr. Wakefield who encouraged the movement. He repeated the conversation to Rafiuddin also. Abdul Rehman was given a suitable post in the government service, and Mistri Yakub Ali was given a decent Government contract, the trouble would subside”.

In his oral evidence, Thakur Kartar Singh emphatically told the Enquiry Commission that as the Police Minister, Mr. Wakefield had shown masterly inaction’ in dealing with the trouble that snowballed into the worst type of carnage. The evidence of Thakur Kartar Singh exposed the conspiracy hatched by Mr. Wakefield with the active collusion of a mischievous element of the Reading Room Party.

Inspector General of State Police, Colonel Gandarb Singh, deposed before the Commission that though theoretically he was the head of the Police but all the powers were exercised by the Police Minister, Mr. Wakefield[99]. He further informed the Commission that Colonel Rahmat Ullah Khan, General Staff Officer, had been given instructions to get the cavalry and the Regiment ready[100]. He once more rang the Police Minister for directions but without any success.

General Samandar Khan informed the Commission that government did not take prompt action in suppressing the agitation. Mirza Ghulam Mustafa and Colonel Ghulam Ali Shah stated before the Commission that unless the preachings exciting communal hatred were not stopped with an iron hand, the communal tension would not end.

Lt. Colonel Bhagwan Singh, a former Private Secretary to Maharaja Hari Singh, in his book, *Political Conspiracies of Kashmir*, writes on page 31:

‘When the agitation had spread far and wide, Mr. Wakefield one day called Sheikh Abdulla and Mohd. Yusuf Shali and asked them that they should unite and be prepared. He promised that he would get their demands granted by His Highness and if His Highness did not grant them, he would get them from the Viceroy. Sheikh Abdullah said Mr. Wakefield told him that if he wanted to be a leader, he should resign from his service. In this holocaust which shook the State, Mr. Wakefield, Mr. Effendi, Nawab Khusro Jung and Abdul Majid Khan were the mute supporters of this agitation”. The role Mr. Wakefield played in encouraging the agitation was highlighted by the Governor of Kashmir, Raizada Tarlok Chand. He stated before the Enquiry Commission that when he rang him to inform about the grim situation at the Central Jail on July 13, 1931, Mr. Wakefield was already with the Resident. It shows that both shared the fruit of conspiracy hatched against the ruler.

The Kashmiri Pandits who suffered the worst in this carnage submitted their case on August 12, 1931, through their representative, notably by Pt. Prem Nath Bazaz, the President of the Sanatan Dharm Young Men’s Association of Kashmir:

‘During the late Maharaja Pratap Singh’s rule, English education was introduced in the State. The Kashmir Hindus as usual, took full advantage of it while the Muslims lagged behind in spite of special Muslim scholarships and liberal grants in-aid. Naturally the Kashmir Hindus were recruited in the lower grades of the clerical establishment. Barring the first few years of his rule, when he was ‘condemned unheard’, Maharaja Pratap Singh’s time was marked by the general improvement in the administration of the State. What with the opening up of the interior of the country by a network of district roads providing tolerable means of transport and traffic, construction of the Jhelum valley and the Banihal cart roads, linking the State with the outside world, cash assessment of land revenue and tenancy laws, establishing security of tenure introduction of primary education and co-operative credit societies, suppression of forced labour, enforcement of laws against alienation of land, construction of irrigation canals, ensuring a dependable water supply and other salutary measures, the standard of living among the peasant classes had risen and a general improvement was markedly perceptible”.

“During the closing years of the reign of Maharaja Pratap Singh, the communal politics of the Punjab crossed the State boundaries for the first time. Serious allegations were made against his rule and the matter was represented to His Excellency Lord Reading, the then Viceroy of India. The allegations were scrutinized and proved to be grossly malicious and untrue. The leaders of the agitation were punished; Mr. Sayeed-ud-din Shawl was externed, a Muslim Tehsildar, Mr. Hassan Shah Kakshbandi’s jagir was confiscated”.

“On his accession to the throne, the present Maharaja Hari Singh announced that his religion was justice. His love for his Muslim subjects is sufficiently evidenced by his participation in Id prayers. He granted land for Iddgah in Jammu and had a compound wall built round it. Boons were announced relieving the peasantry, which is mainly Muslim, of unpaid revenue arrears and granting them facilities in the matter of grazing lands for cattle and transferring Khalsa lands to them”.

‘He granted a pardon to Messers, Sayeedud-Din Shawl and Noor Shah and restored the jagir of Mr. Hassan Shah Nakshbandi. Mr. Noor Shah has been promoted since his re-employment’.

‘Nine years ago in his capacity as the Senior Member of the State Council of his uncle, he had the definition of the term State Subject made more stringent. He issued orders for reserving public offices and grant of land for State subjects only’.

‘He took steps to relieve the indebtedness of the peasant classes. Special benches were established in the Kashmir valley to decide under summary procedure all cases arising out of what may be called ‘shaliadvance’ contracts, out of 172-79 suits, 8189 more dismissed causing a heavy loss to a section of the Hindus’.

‘The Grain Control Department of Kashmir which was set up nine years ago, has assured the producer a fair price for the yield of his land and protected him from the profiteering middlemen whose speculation had brought him a profit of over 200 per cent’.

‘In order to liquidate rural indebtedness, not covered by the Grain Regulations, the Agriculturists’ Relief Regulation was hurried through with retrospective effect, behind the back of the Hindus, involving them in incalculable loss of money. The Land Alientation Act was extended to some Muslim peasants to prevent them from losing their landed proprietorship’.

‘The Scholarship Selection Board and the Civil Service Recruitment Board seem to have been designed simply to create new opportunities for Muslims. Scholarships were granted to Muslim graduates to qualify in law in British India although no such scholarships have been awarded to Hindus’.

‘It is notorious that Wakefield issued an order to the Srinagar Municipality to select only Muslims for certain vacancies although trained Hindu graduates were available, what wonder then that scores of starving Hindu graduates declared their consent to accept Islam in order to be considered for those posts’.

‘It is evident that the Maharaja has done more for his Muslim subjects than even a Muslim Prince would or could do for them. Mainly to benefit the Muslims of Kashmir, the Maharaja had made primary education free and compulsory in the cities of Srinagar, Jammu and other townships in the State. The Maharaja has allowed an ever increasing recruitment of Muslims irrespective of qualifications, both in government and in his household’.

‘An adequate explanation for the recent occurrences which culminated in the rebellion on July 13, 1931, must be sought in the violent propaganda persistently carried on in the Punjab Muslim press. The agitation to secure the Muslim rights was being vigorously carried for a number of years by the Punjab Muslim press, the all India Kashmiri Muslim Conference, the Simla Kashmir Muslim Board and the Punjab Labour Board. Dr. Sir Mohammed Iqbal’s Presidential address at the last session of the All-India Muslim League which openly advocated a Muslim confederacy for north-western India, inevitably fired the imagination of our educated Muslims’.

‘In December 1930 a session of the AllIndia Kashmir Muslim Conference was held which was presided over by the Nawab of Dacca who in his fiery address declared that it was a matter of shame for the Muslim majority to be

ruled by a nonMuslim minority. The Jammu Muslim Young Men's Association sent its volunteers to the Conference who returned fully imbued with the violent communalistic ideas'.

"Then followed in quick succession, the Muslim vernacular papers-The Inquilab, the Kashmir Mussalman, the *Kashmiri Mazlum*, the *Hatta Hayae* and the *Sunrise*, organ of the Ahmedia community, all published virulent articles against the Hindu Dogra-Raj. The papers, besides circulating the false news and making personal attacks on the Maharaja, raised the very dangerous cry of Islam in Danger in order to enkindle the religious fanaticism among the Kashmiri Muslims".
'The *Daur-e-Jadid* of Lahore, dated: 1, 1931, announced that a few leaders from Punjab would be sent for purposes of political propaganda to the Maharaja's territory. Papers containing objectionable material were sent to the address of an obscure Muslim gentleman at Sangam Darwaza in Srinagar to be hawked about by the volunteer corps'.

'The Police Minister, Mr. Wakefield, was not at all disturbed by the violent antiHindu and anti-government activities of the Muslim hot heads for months together, was so upset by the happenings of May 6, 1930, that he abused the President of the Jammu Municipality for not being able to stop the hartal, with the result that the latter had to resign'.

'The incarceration of Sardar Budh Singh is another instance in point. A SubDivisional Magistrate and Wazir-e-Wazarat, this man of saintly character, resigned his comfortable post to serve his countrymen irrespective of caste and creed. Papers like the **Milap** and the **Pratap** were blacklisted notwithstanding their loyalty towards the Maharaja, whose cause they always espoused'.

'Some Muslim officers charged with gross mismanagement on the basis of unchallengeable documentary proof were screened. The case of the Director-General of Cooperation and Agriculture, Mr. G.A. Ashai, serious charges were levelled against him but was ultimately retired'.

'The Jammu Muslim Young Men's Association grew stronger everyday and seditious meetings were held very frequently. The authorities seemed to have forgotten the very existence of the Standing Regulation for Seditious

Meetings which would not allow them to hold a single meeting. This party intensified the agitation during the Maharaja's absence in Europe and was mainly responsible for creating chaos against the Maharaja on his return'.

"One Faqir Abu Barkat Mohammed Shah, Fazil Sajjad Nashin of Jabalpur, President of Hizb-e-Allah or the Military of God, visited Jammu and Kashmir and distributed pamphlets. A secret organization was formed which was named 'Khudai-Faujdar club' and Muslims were enrolled on the strict understanding that they would be ready 'to do or die' and they had their own uniform and badges. Batches of volunteers were sent out in the villages to keep their co-religionists informed of their activities".

'Some malcontents, notably Mr. G.A. Ashai, who was prematurely retired from service on very serious charges of bribery and misconduct, and Sheikh Abdullah, M.Sc; a teacher in the Government High School, seized this opportunity for winning glory by openly identifying themselves with the movement which was fast spreading on religious fanaticism. Is it not a surprise that the government should have allowed this anti-Hindu, antiMaharaja and anti-government propaganda to stalk the land unchecked and uninterferred with?

'The Muslim agitation in Srinagar initially laid stress on the unhappy conditions of Muslims as well as their demands or Haquq. In the meanwhile, the different sections of the Ahmedis, Khanqahis and the Nusral-ul-Islam Party were organized for the agitation. The meeting at the Khanquah-e-Mohalla was attended by the two Mir waizes and a joint action was urged. At the same meeting, seven representatives were chosen to represent their grievances to His Highness. It was at this very meeting that one Abdul Qadir, a cook of a European visitor, delivered a highly inflammatory speech asking the people to end the Hindu Raj and be prepared to use lathis and other weapons, if the needs arose".

'A Muslim was caught while attempting to break the idol in the Shankar Acharya Temple. The Sanatam Dharm Sabha of Fatehkadal and the Hindu Sahayak Sabha of Srinagar moved resolutions requesting the government to bring the offender to book and prayed for the rule of law and order'.

‘It is reported that the Police Minister granted long interviews to the leading conspirators and other responsible officers gave these hot headed young men an importance to which they had no title’.

‘On July 11, 1931, at Makhdum Sahib’s fair at Hari Parbat, inflammatory speeches were delivered which had their full-effect. Muslims were convinced that something ominous would take place on July 13, 1931. On the morning of July 13, 1931, many Hindus felt apprehensive and gave expression to their fears in whispers’.

‘The incidents of the uprising of July 13, 1931, were prearranged rebellions against the government and not riots provoked on the spur of the movement by a clash between the Hindus and the Muslims. Our Muslim countrymen had been persistently taught to believe that the government and the Hindus were synonymous and that a blow at the latter was a blow at the former’.

‘A little earlier in the day, volunteers had been hurrying about and telling Muslims to observe a complete hartal and inciting them to loot and plunder. It is significant that the loot took place at almost the same time at such distant parts of the city as Maharajganj, Chhattabal and Vicharnag. This fact shows that the outbreak was prearranged and that it was not the firing that gave the provocation”.

‘At Vicharnag, 12 families inhabiting ten houses were looted. It is alleged that volunteers came down to Vicharnag in a motor-car and gave orders for the loot which began at 2:30 pm. The loot here was intensive, apparently owing to the fact that Mr. Sheikh Abdullah lived at Soura, in the vicinity of Vicharnag. The greatest sufferer here was Pt. Kailash Butt who happened to be the creditor of Abdullah’s brother. It has been stated that Mr. Abdullah’s grand father, Sheikh Sattar, who is said to have been the ring-leader of Shia loot sixty years back’.

‘The loss at Vicharnag was not less than five lakhs caused by burning of account books and other documents were incalculable.

‘The cutting of telephone lines by the insurgent mob at the jail and more than 50 miles away on the Banihal Cart Road, the burning of the Sangam

bridge 23 miles away from Srinagar, all point to a general and widespread rebellion, skilfully organized to paralyze the government'.

'Respectable Muslim citizens like Khan Sahib Ghulam Mustafa, Jagirdar Noor Shah and Salam Shah, could have saved the Hindus, shut themselves up in their houses and not a single Muslim leader went to save or console the Hindus'.

'The Maharaja appointed an Enquiry Commission on the day following the outbreak and before the disturbances were actually over. It may not be out of place to point out in this connection that the government showed bankruptcy of statesmanship'.

This statement by P.N. Bazaz shows as to what had really happened on that fateful day of July 13, 1931.

The official Enquiry Commission instituted by the Maharaja recorded the evidence upto 11th September, during which it examined a hundred and twelve witnesses and finally submitted its report to His Highness on September 24, 1931.

After fully convinced that the rebellion had been executed by Mr. Wakefield in nexus with the local stooges, the Maharaja removed him from the State Council of Ministers. His opinion about the British as being a nation of 'crooks and frauds' proved right because these people could not be relied on in any circumstances[101]. The Maharaja realized that the riots of July 13, 1931, was a regular British conspiracy hatched by the Political Department of the British Indian Government hand in glove with the British serving in the state administration.

On July 25, 1931, Maharaja Hari Singh appointed Raja Hari Kishan Kaul as his Minister-in-Waiting and later on he was elevated to the position of the Prime Minister of the State. Raja Hari Kishan Kaul, an administrator of lifelong experience in British India was called to take charge of the State and handle the law and order problem with energy and tact born of experience[102].

The July riots triggered by the Muslims were assured of the British support because of their obligations to the Muslim League against the Indian National Congress[103]. To pursue their policy of 'divide and rule' the British aligned with the Muslim League to appease them[104].

The publication of the Report of the Enquiry Commission submitted to the Maharaja was 'a rude shock to the Political Department' and it asked the Maharaja through the Resident that he could not be allowed to have his own way in handling the affairs of the State.

The Kashmiri Muslims got frustrated by this movement led by Sheikh Abdulah as they achieved nothing significant out of the turbulence which was created in the name of Islam[105]. It was their belief that their relations with the benevolent ruler had been spoiled who had relieved them of their servitude from the moneylenders and many other problems[106]. They also felt that the entire movement had been centred round the question of securing some jobs in the administration. The objective assessment about the whole affair formed by the broadminded intelligentsia of the valley was that it was a law and order problem which had been blown out of proportion[107].

The new Prime Minister, Raja Hari Kishan Kaul, realized that it was not an easy task to restore normalcy in the State unless he had a meeting with the agitating leaders. In a meeting with the representatives of the agitation, a truce was concluded and the leaders of the Reading Room Party gave an undertaking to this effect to suspend the agitation and to present their grievances to His Highness[108]. All the political prisoners were released and withdrew cases against them. The first nationalist organization of the State, Dogra Sadr Sabha was also banned for supporting the cause of the Indian National Congress for the freedom of India. After the July riots, the Prime Minister of the State, Raja Hari Kishan Kaul, removed the ban on 'Ranbir' and the Dogra Sadr Sabha. The case pending against Lala Hans Raj Gupta in the court was withdrawn and the '*Ranbir*' resumed its publication[109].

The efforts of the administration to normalize the conditions in Kashmir were contrary to the expectations of the Political Department of the British

Indian Government and Muslim Conference as they were not prepared to lose their control over the Kashmiris.

Sheikh Abdullah and the members of the Muslim Reading Room Party found that their anti-State activities were going to be liquidated by the new administrator and the loss of confidence in their leadership by the Muslim masses were leading them nowhere.

Mr. G.E.C. Wakefield after his removal from the State ministerial post had established his headquarters at Murree near Rawalpindi. He with the active support of the Kashmir Resident sent money and instructions to Sheikh Abdullah and his Reading Room Party through Mirza Bashiruddin Ahmed Mahmud of Qadian to organize a revolt against the Maharaja and his administration[110].

While the State administration was trying to implement the Truce terms, the fresh agitation by the Muslim Reading Room Party was a direct breach of the undertaking signed by the Muslim representatives led by Sheikh Abdullah.

The Prime Minister, Raja Hari Kishan Kaul arrested the 'Chief-mischiefmaker', Sheikh Abdulla, on September 21, 1931, for delivering a seditious speech at Khanquah Mohalla[111]. The Muslim masses strongly reacted against his arrest by the administration. His arrest was exploited by the leading members of the Reading Room Party by organizing a hartal in the city and a 'War Council' was formed to carry out the agitation and Mufti Jala-ud-Din was appointed its dictator. When permission to take out a procession in the city was refused, the Muslims tried to defy the law and threw brickbats at the military posted as strategic points. "As pre-planned, the flare up spread to other towns of Kashmir as well. The military picket in retaliation opened fire at Anantnag killing 19 and wounding 30 persons. Yet in another incident at Shopian, the Police Station was attacked and one Head Constable was killed. Numberless people were arrested all over Kashmir under the orders from Khawja Salam Shah who was the Assistant Governor of the district administration at that time"[112].

The State administration under Hari Kishan Kaul realized that chronic diseases require drastic surgical operations. So on September 24, 1931, a special Notification No. 19-L was promulgated similar to one ordinance which was enforced in Burma by the British to suppress the revolt. Special Notification enhanced the powers of the army, police and civil administration to arrest a person without warrant against whom a reasonable suspicion existed or a person who acted in a manner prejudicial to the restoration of law and order and no person was detained for more than a month under this ordinance[113]. Any person who pelted stones or indulged in anti-State activities would be punished with imprisonment upto six months or a fine of one thousand.

Brigadier Sutherland of the State Force was ordered to handle the volatile situation in the municipal limits of Srinagar. The special Notification remained in force for eleven days and it succeeded in restoring complete law and order in the troubled limits of the city.

Instead of appreciating the measures applied by the State administration in restoring complete normalcy in Srinagar, Political Department criticized the Maharaja because it had expected the turbulence to continue for a long time.

P.N.K. Bamzai describes the British attitude in his book *The History of Kashmir*. “The British Indian Government now appeared on the scene in a commanding role. A peremptory note was sent through the Kashmir Resident to the Maharaja demanding its acceptance within 24 hours. The note mentioned that the government of India took a very serious view of the situation and feared widespread outbreaks in Punjab. There were also apprehensions of Muslims from India sending Jathas to the State. The Government of India, therefore, suggest that the concessions of the following nature should be announced immediately”

i Definite and immediate steps should be taken to remedy the grievances of Muslim subjects, such as the cow killing ordinance, the prohibition of khutba, the stoppage of Azan, etc.

ii A completely unprejudiced British officer be deputed by the Government of India to hold a full inquiry into the Muslim grievances.

iii A European ICS officer be appointed as the Prime Minister.

iv Sir Daya Kishan Kaul, brother of Raja Hari Kishan Kaul be relieved as his presence against His Highness' interests.

Raja Hari Kishan Kaul applied his diplomacy to solve the fiasco in such a way as to win the confidence of the Reading Room Party and at the same time to satisfy the Government of India. He sent his emissaries, Thakur Kartar Singh and Pt. Jiwan lal Mattoo for negotiations to Badami Bagh Jail where Sheikh Abdullah and the leaders of the Reading Room Party had been confined[114]. They got convinced that Sheikh Abdullah could not tolerate the hardships of jail life and was ready to give an undertaking once again to secure his release[115].

Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues were granted general amnesty and were released on Maharaja Hari Singh's 36th birthday.

In the meantime, Maharaja Hari Singh, constituted another Riot Enquiry Commission on October 12, 1931 to probe the disturbances of September 1931 to be presided over by Sir Barjor Dalal, the Chief Justice of the State High Court. The British Indian Government was upset over this step of the ruler and it rejected the appointment of the Chief Justice of the State High Court to inquire into the incidents and insisted that a British officer be appointed for this purpose[116]. Apparently the British wanted the appointment of Mr. Glancy to head the Commission in keeping with the wishes of the Kashmiri Muslims[117]. But Maharaja Hari Singh stuck to his guns without caring for the ultimatum served to him earlier through the Resident. The result of the strong steps taken by Raja Hari Kishan Kaul against the miscreants had dimmed their hopes of reviving the agitation against the Maharaja's Government.

"Taking advantage of the promise by the Maharaja in his proclamation of October 5, 1931, to give due consideration to the logical demands submitted by any section of his subjects, Kashmiri Muslims submitted a lengthy memorial on October 19, 1931, drafted by the Mirza of Qadian and it was read before His Highness by Khawja Saad-ud-Din Shawl"[118]. The Memorial demanded the appointment of an independent Commission to

enquire into incidents leading to the September riots. It also demanded the declaration of Fundamental Rights of religious freedom; establishment of an Assembly; freedom of speech and press and equality of rights. It further demanded that conversion from one religion to another would not entail the confiscation of the convert's property. Another demand was that the entire administration of the towns and cities be handled by the municipalities.

The All India Majlis-e-Ahrar was founded by Chaudhary Afzal-ul-Haq, a group of Muslims operating in Punjab, wanted to secure a foothold in Kashmir politics. Once they were staunch nationalists in the Indian politics but for not participating in the Civil-Disobedience Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1930, they had lost their prestige and identity. A European Committee formed under the aegis of Mr. Wakefield in Punjab offered the Ahrars an opportunity to align with the cause of Kashmiri Muslims. As desired by the British to forment trouble inside the State, they decided to send Jathas.

The Young Men's Muslim Association of Jammu supported this move initiated by the Ahrars because they had lost faith in the cowardly leadership of Sheikh Abdullah and the Muslim Reading Room Party.

The Ahrars started sending their volunteers inside the State from two points; from Suchetgarh into Jammu and from Kohala to the Kashmir valley. By November 2, 1931, two thousand volunteers had been arrested at Suchetgarh fully knowing that it might lead to communal disturbances[119].

Now communal activities shifted from Kashmir to Jammu with this move of the Ahrars forced entry into the State.

On October 30, 1931, Allah Rakha Saghar of 'Anjuman-e-Sarfaroshan' served an ultimatum to the State administration to accept their demands within 24 hours. The very next day, on October 31, 1931, by carrying a copy of the Dalal Riot Enquiry Commission in a bier passing through the streets of the city, he publicly burnt it down at Razi Camp and the police took no action against the trouble makers[120]. He launched the Civil Disobedience Movement by leading a band of thirty volunteers and shouted most provocative slogans against the State administration[121]. For delivering

anti-State speeches, Allah Rakha Saghar was arrested on November 2, 1931, and “his arrest caused considerable consternation among the Jammu Muslims”[122].

On November 3, 1931, an ugly incident happened at Razi Camp in Jammu where firing had to be resorted to which claimed two lives. Consequent to this incident, a hartal was observed in Jammu which coincided with the Durbar Movement. When Maharaja Hari Singh reached the Winter Capital of the State on November 4, 1931, he found that Jammu was observing a total hartal and the State forces were patrolling the streets of the city. He realized that the foxy diplomacy applied by the Political Department had worked in bringing down the worst situation in Jammu. No alternative was left to him but to seek the help from the British Government in India to fuse the tension and to salvage the worst situation.

The Political Department of the British Indian Government had been impatiently waiting for this opportunity. The British, ‘troops were rushed to Jammu City to disperse the irate mobs[123] on November 7, 1931, and were replaced by the State troops in other parts of the State. Lord Willingdon promulgated an ordinance the very same day prohibiting the entry of the Ahrars into the State’[124].

‘The Kashmir State (Protection against disorders) ordinance was to prevent the Ahrar Jathas making a forced entry into the State from British India and it remained in force for two months[125]. It was a turning point in the history of the State when the Maharaja had been squeezed badly and also began an era of British intervention once again in all matters of the State[126].

The British intervention coerced the Maharaja to dissolve the Second Riot Enquiry Commission constituted on October 12, 1931, to enquire into the excesses committed in the September disturbances. On November 12, 1931, the ruler of the State appointed another Enquiry Commission to be headed by Mr. L. Middleton, recommended by the Indian government to probe the September riots.

The appointment of the Commission was welcomed by the Kashmiri Muslims as this enquiry would condemn the unprovoked firing by the State

Police and Military on the innocent people and also absolve them of their guilt.

Mr. Middleton started its business of recording the evidence of the witnesses on November 15, 1931, and concluded its job on December 24, 1931 and submitted his report to His Highness in January 1932. He held the State administration responsible for having used the excessive force in suppressing the riots, thus giving a new dimension to the Muslim agitation. The report condemned the State administration for its action and gave the Kashmiri Muslims a clean chit and absolved them of their negative attitude and nasty designs in formenting trouble inside the State.

The State police intercepted some correspondence between Mufti Ziauddin of Poonch and Abdul Rahim Dard in which the former had pleaded to help the Kashmiri Muslims to overthrow the State Government[127]. This conspiracy against the Maharaja was exposed and Mufti Ziauddin was externed from the State. Sheikh Abdullah, as usual, delivered some provocative speeches against his externment for inciting the Muslims. He was arrested on January 9, 1932, for defying the ban for making an offensive speech in Khanquah Mohalla and after a summary trial was sentenced to six months imprisonment[128]. Hartals were observed in Baramulla, Sopore and Uri following his arrest but the drastic action taken by the authorities against the miscreants restored normalcy all over the Kashmir province[129].

Prime Minister, Raja Hari Kishan Kaul, contacted some Hindu organizations in British India in an attempt to create unrest in Muslim ruled States to embarrass both the Indian government as well the British Indian Muslims[130]. The idea behind this move was to cut to size the outside influence which was badly affecting the harmony of the State. The British intelligence got wind of the move and asked the Resident to do his best to stop this move[131].

The Political Department could not tolerate the State's Prime Minister, Raja Hari Kishan Kaul, who had handled the Kashmiri agitation with an iron hand and the Viceroy commented that "the villain of the piece really was the Maharaja's Prime Minister, Raja Hari Kishan Kaul, the son of Raja

Suraj Mal Kaul who had served the late Maharaja Pratap Singh in the capacity of a Minister.[131A] He proved a great hindrance for the British interests in the State and the appointment of a Britisher as the Prime Minister of the State was their priority to secure the control of Gilgit[131B]. With this view, the British forced the Maharaja "To change, his Prime Minister in favour of their nominee' so far as the British Indian Government had kept their troops in Jammu even after complete normalcy had been restored"[131C].

Mirpur Disturbances

About the same time reports started emanating from Mirpur district about the mass killings both of Hindus and Sikhs by the Muslims. To face the ugly situation at Mirpur, Maharaja Hari Singh sought the British help in handling the grave situation there. The Political Department of the British Indian Government flatly refused to help the Maharaja at this critical juncture unless the Prime Minister of the State, Raja Hari Kishan Kaul, was removed from the prime slot and was to be replaced by a British civilian from the Indian Government to fill this post[132]. To save the loss of precious lives at Mirpur forced the Maharaja to remove Raja Hari Kishan Kaul on February 22, 1932, and Lt. Colonel E.J.D. Colvin, an ICS officer was appointed the new Prime Minister of the State. "With this appointment, the conspiracy hatched by the British Indian Government reached its successful conclusion to completely subjugate the State administration"[133].

'No-Rent' movement was launched by Qazi Gauhar Rehman of the Muslim Young Men's Association in Jammu province in November 1931, which reached Mirpur and became the main storm-centre of this movement, although the State Government had announced remission in land revenues in different parts of the State due to crop failures[134]. Muslim landlords of Mirpur, Raja Mohammad Akbar Khan Ghazi, Elahi Bux and Khawaja Wahab-udDin, who were mostly retired army personnel exploited the slogan of No-Rent Campaign to their advantage by withdrawing the payment of land revenue to the State Government but also resorted to violence against the local business Hindu community[135].

Mirpur was at a distant place from the winter capital of the State and the means of communications were poor so the State Force could not reach there in case of any emergency. Mohammad Akram had been lately appointed the Wazir-Wazarat of the district administration and the Superintendent of Police was Wazir Mohammed. The top brass of district administration in Mirpur were Muslims.

Ahrar agitators further complicated the charged situation by sending a large number of Jathas clandestinely from Punjab to Mirpur to create fresh riots and violence against the Hindu rule[136]. December 29, 1931 had been declared the last date for the final payment of revenue by the agriculturists and Patwaris of Mirpur district had been instructed to collect the same by this date[137]. An ordinance had been issued by the State Government for the realization of the land revenue and this ordinance provided to arrest all those who were defaulters[138].

In the meantime the houses of two Zaildars, one Choudhary Abbas Ali of village Chattan and the other Choudhary Fazl Allahi of village Patian, were burnt down by the miscreants in Mirpur because both had opposed the agitation on January 8, 1931 and Section 144 was promulgated in Mirpur. Raja Mohammed Afzal Khan, the District Magistrate of Mirpur, accompanied by a posse of Police force went to village Rehman only two miles away from Mirpur, to realize the arrears of the land revenue. In a clash with the villagers the Police was compelled to open fire in self-defence. As a result of the firing, one Gulab was killed and some others got wounded[139]. A huge procession was taken out in Mirpur with the dead body of Gulab. Thus the situation became more acute and tense. The real purpose of the Political Department for formenting trouble in Mirpur was to force the Maharaja to hand over the complete control over Gilgit because after 1930, the threat from Soviet Russia loomed larger in British calculations[140].

The Maharaja’s government pleaded its case through the Resident for the withdrawal of the British troops from its soil the complete normalcy had been restored[141] on December 9, 1931, the Durbar’s views were conveyed to the British Government that the presence of British troops was no longer required in Jammu. “The Resident’s views did not convince the British authorities because of the ‘extraneous dangers’, so the retention of British

troops was in the interest of the State. It was ultimately not before December 21, 1931, that the British Government reluctantly yielded to the State's demand for withdrawing the troops"[142].

On Friday, January 15, 1932, Maulvi Mohammed Zaman and Maulvi Mohammed Ismail of Amritsar in an address to the gathering of ten thousand agriculturists assembled in Jama Masjid in Mirpur, warned against the payment of land revenue to local revenue authorities[143]. Several thousand local Muslims once again assembled in the Jama Masjid on January 22, 1932, and delivered provocative speeches against the Hindu rule in order to create fanaticism. Thus the riots spread all over Mirpur and the rebels attacked Kotli, Solana, Batoh, Bhal and other towns of the district. Military help was sought by the Sub-Inspector of Sukhchainpur to curb the riots but no such help reached him due to lack of communications. The villages of the surrounding areas tried to contact the higher authorities for protection but all went in vain.

The gravity of the situation in the Mirpur district was confirmed by the State Publicity officer on January 25, 1932, that the Muslims had revolted against the State and the Hindus were in extreme danger[144]. The reaction was the result of the offensive speeches delivered by the Punjabi clergies who had been carrying the poisonous propaganda among the Muslims of Mirpur[145].

Mirpur town was besieged by the agitators on January 27, 1932, where more than one thousand refugees had taken shelter from about thirtyfive villages of Rajouri, Kotli and Mirpur itself[146]. It was here that refugees described their 'plight in pathetic terms' that how their dear ones were burnt alive, how their mothers, wives and daughters were abducted and raped and several Hindus were coerced to embrace Islam[147].

Mr. L.W.Jardine was deputed to handle the grim situation with complete administrative powers because the District Magistrate of Mirpur, Raja Mohammed Afzal Khan, was unable to quell the riots being himself a resident of the same tehsil so he allowed his co-regionalists to ransack Mirpur. The Military force was under the control of Col. Rehmat ullah who did not bother about the Hindus and Sikhs being ravaged by the Muslims.

The gurudwara at Alibeg was burnt down and reduced to ashes. The refugees who had taken shelter in the Devidwara was also burnt down leaving the victims at the mercy of free-booters. ‘The Granth Sahib was desecrated and the icons in the temples were broken to bits’[148]. Smali, Sukhchainpur, Dharmasal, Seri fort and the building of the cooperative department at Ritta along with the post office was set on fire by the rebels.

Some Hindu and Sikh women from the villages of Pratap Singhpura and Kulwari reached British India and from there sent telegrams to the State authorities informing them about the grim situation and pleaded for protection[149].

Rajouri Tehsil in Reasi district and the other one Bhimber in Mirpur district suffered the same tragic fate by the Muslim marauders. Houses of Hindus of Darhal, Bharot and Shahdara were ransacked and burnt down by the rowdy crowd of five hundred Muslims on January 28, 1932. Similarly the violent mob attacked the Thana Town where the agitators plundered the houses of Hindus and Sikhs while the temples and dharamshalas were burnt down. The Hindus of Khalyan and Barang towns in Bhimber Tehsil had to run for their lives to escape the wrath of rebels. Rajouri Town was successfully protected by the Tehsildar of Rajouri, Sardar Natha Singh and Wazir-e-Wazarat, Sardar Tirth Singh who reached there in time with some force.

[150]

When Maharaja Hari Singh came to know about this catastrophe from the refugees reaching Jammu, he was left with no option but to seek British help on January 29, 1932, to restore normalcy in the affected Mirpur district. This was precisely what the British Indian Government had been anxiously waiting for. So within a short time the British troops were dispatched to handle the worst situation but not before the Hindu towns had been completely wiped out by the Muslims with the nexus of the Ahrars. Within a short time, the disturbances were suppressed by the British troops and complete normalcy was restored in the entire area.

Maharaja Hari Singh yielded to the demands of the Indian government to announce the withdrawal of the Notification 19-L and amnesty to all

political prisoners. He also announced the institution of an impartial commission to the grievances of the Muslims and to make suitable recommendations to remove them. On the request of Maharaja Hari Singh, the Indian Government loaned him the services of Sir B.J. Glancy of the Foreign and Political Department to preside over the Commission. Besides its chairman, Sir B.J. Glancy, the Commission had four members, from both the Provinces of the State.

Muslims of Mirpur presented a memorandum to the Maharaja pleading for the dismissal of Zaildars, secondly land revenue to be reduced by half and employment of Mirpur Muslims in the State Services in direct proportion to their population.[151]

Some Hindu and Sikh members of the Indian Legislative Assembly in a deputation, namely Bhai Parmanaand, Sardar Sant Singh, Sardar Harbans Singh, Mr. Raghubir Singh, Mr. B. Dass, Mr. S. G. Jog and Mr. Lal Chand Navalrai, had shown their anguish that the Ahrars in Punjab were sending Jathas to disturb the harmony of the State. The Viceroy had assured them that no such nasty thing would be permitted inside the State. Taking into magnitude the catastrophe which afflicted Mirpur and the surrounding areas, the above mentioned Hindu and Sikh members of the Indian Legislative Assembly in a letter addressed to the Viceroy on February 10,1932, pinpointed the devastation and held the British Government responsible for the mass killings and the loss of property[152] that had happened in the month of January, 1932.

Mr. C. V. Salusbury, the British Officer on Special Duty at Mirpur held the State Government responsible for the “exclusion of Muslim agriculturists from the State Services and the defects in the Revenue administration were the main causes of the Communal riots generated by the Muslims[153]. The communal nature of the riots was confirmed by L. W. Jardine who as the State’s Finance Minister toured the affected areas after the riots[154]. Commenting on the unrest, the Revenue Minister, V. N. Mehta, inducted in the Colvin Ministry, stated, “The agriculturist Relief Act had placed the Muslim debtor very much beyond the clutches of the moneylender for his debts and the application of the Land Alienation Provision has confined

alienation of land within the tribes devoted to agriculture, thus keeping the non-agriculturist moneylender out of the proprietorship of land together."[155]

The plunder and devastation of Mirpur, Kotli, Bhimber and its surrounding areas had been carried out with the perfection of a mission to teach the Maharaja a lesson and to coerce him to surrender the administration of Gilgit.

Maharaja Hari Singh appointed a Relief Committee to compensate the losses incurred by innocent people during the disturbances. He asked people to contribute generously but warned that no such Relief Committees be formed outside the State for this purpose.[156]

Col Colvin had been in office for over 9 months during which time he had gained complete control over the entire administration. "Mr. C.V. Salusbury was appointed the administrator of Jammu and Mr. Lawther was brought back to take over the reins of Inspector General of Police in the State in replacement of Lt. Colonel Gandharb Singh. Mr. Amar Singh of the Punjab Police was appointed as the Deputy Inspector General of State Police while several Hindu officers including Thakur Chattar Singh Charak, Governor of Jammu, were relieved forthwith. Mr. Salusbury filled up all the administrative vacancies by promoting Muslims to these posts. The Maharaja had thus been humbled and the aim of the British Indian Government was served.[156]

Mr. Glancy submitted his Report on March 22, 1932, a month after Col. Colvin had settled down in office and Raja Hari Kishan Kaul had been relieved from the Prime Ministership of the State. The report was deliberately delayed because the present incumbent to the Prime Minister's post, Col. Colvin and Mr. Glancy were afraid that if the Report was submitted during the tenure of Raja Hari Kishan Kaul, there was every likelihood of the report being sabotaged by the State Government under him[157].

The Maharaja had to accept almost all the recommendations of the Grievances Enquiry Commission known as the Glancy Commission as very few that could be immediately implemented and most of them required long

term planning.[157A] When the report of the Commission was published, the events in the State were moving fast because the people had awakened from the political slumber and clamouring for their basic rights. The acceptance of the recommendations by the Maharaja raised the popularity of Sheikh Abdullah and his Reading Room Party to a very high niche. The entire credit for achievement was claimed by the Ahmedis as the Mirza of Qadian was the guiding force behind Sheikh Abdullah.[158]

After his release from Jail on June 4, 1932, Sheikh Abdullah in a meeting with the Resident convinced him that he and his followers had great faith in Col. Colvin and were perfectly satisfied with the recommendations of the Glancy Commission but they only feared the intrigue by the Hindus might lead to these recommendations not being carried out fully[159]. About his loyalty to the British, Sheikh Abdullah in an interview to the Civil & Military Gazette of Lahore said: “The bulk of Kashmiri Muslims have faith in Col. Colvin and Mr. Jardine. Since the appointment of Col. Colvin, Kashmir has changed for good. The Muslims of Kashmir were most thankful to the British Resident who from the very beginning had been most kind and sympathetic to them.” He paid rich tribute to the services rendered by the Kashmir Muslim Conference, particularly the head of the Ahmedia community of Qadian. The reference in the press interview to the British Resident clearly showed the direct involvement of the Resident in fanning communal unrest in the State.

Constitutional Conference:

Newly appointed Prime Minister, Col. Colvin, convened the Constitutional Conference in mid March 1932 after the Grievances Enquiry Commission had completed its report under the Chairmanship of Mr. B.J. Glancy. The most important issue which the Conference wanted to discuss was that there should be a Legislative Assembly in the State, its functions and what should be the basis of its franchise. As regards the powers and functions of the Legislative Assembly, there was unanimous opinion in the Conference. The Assembly was to have the power to frame laws subject to the Maharaja’s assent.

As regards franchise, it was agreed that the number of voters should consist of approximately 10 per cent of the total population of the State. In order to achieve this object, the appointment of a Franchise Committee was necessary. Mr. Glancy recommended that the Assembly be presided over by the Prime Minister or such other Minister as the Maharaja may be pleased to appoint for the purpose. He also recommended that two regular sessions[160] of the Assembly be held, one at Srinagar during September/ October and other at Jammu in February/March[160].

All these recommendations by Mr. Glancy were aimed to break the administrative control of Maharaja Hari Singh over the State. The purpose for which the Political Department had forced the Maharaja to seek the services of Mr. Glancy through the ultimatum served by the British Resident and which the Maharaja could not afford to ignore was reaching its culmination[161].
After the acceptance of the recommendations of the Kashmir Constitutional Reforms Committee, Maharaja Hari Singh appointed a Franchise Committee. Originally this Committee was to be headed by Sir Barjor Dalal, the Chief Justice of the State High Court, besides Mr. L.W. Jardine as Vice President, Thakur Kartar Singh and Sheikh Abdul Qaiyam as members and Mr. Ram Nath Sharma, the Registrar of the High Court, as the Secretary. But on March 24, 1932, Sir Ivo Elliot was replaced by Mr. Jardine as the Vice-President of the Committee and Mr. Hira Nand Raina as the Secretary. The Committee started its business from June 08, 1932, and the final report was submitted to the ruler on December 10, 1932. The Political Department of the British Indian Government had trapped the Maharaja in its dragnet who had been exercising his ruling powers till then under his sole discretion for ushering prosperity to his subjects in utter disregard to the wishes of the British Government[162]. The recommendations of the Constitutional Reforms Commission were accepted by the Maharaja which virtually gave a license to the people for political activity and a fillip to the growth of political parties in the State[163].

Muslim Conference:

“The prominent Muslim participants who were in the thick of politics were quick to realize the importance of floating a single political party to voice

their grievances under the changed circumstances. After initial consultations among themselves Sheikh Abdullah, Ch. Ghulam Abbas, Sheikh Ghulam Qadir and Mistri Yakub Ali, they decided to have a single political party. All India Kashmir Committee of Punjab sent Maulana Abdul Rahim Dard, Maulvi Ghaznavi Syed Habib Shah (Editor of *Syasat*) and Zahur Ahmad to Srinagar in working out the details for drafting a constitution".[164A]Sheikh Abdullah started making efforts for the formation of a political organization for the Muslims of the State with a view to reap the fruits of his communal agitation of the previous years. Before the preparations for holding the first session of the party-in-being were in progress, voices of dissent began to be raised by the Jammu Muslims led by Gauhar Rehman who strongly opposed the idea of floating a single political party for Jammu and Kashmir[165]. Jammu Muslims were reluctant to accept the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah of having given an undertaking to the State Government for securing his release from the Jail to this effect that he would cease all confrontational activities if the recommendations of the Glancy Commission were implemented by the Maharaja[165A]. It was Ch Ghulam Abbas who convinced his co-religionists to accept the formation of a single party for the State[166].

"The *inaugural session of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was held on the 14th, 15th and 16th of October, 1932, in the historic Pathar Masjid. The Committee which drafted the Constitution also adopted a party flag similar to that of the All India Muslim League. The flag hoisting ceremony was performed on October 14, 1932 by Syed Zain-ul-Abdeen Wali Ullah Shah Sahib, a representative of the All-India Kashmir Committee*"[168]. In his Presidential address, Sheikh Abdullah incited the Kashmiri Muslims to carry on a State-wide propaganda to impress the Maharaja that they were not satisfied with the implementation of the Glancy Reports. In the entire proceedings of this session, nobody neither the President nor anybody else '*condemned the atrocities perpetrated on the Hindus and Sikhs of the Mirpur District*'[169]. The resolutions adopted by the First Session of the Muslim Conference

'demanded *the employment of Muslims in the State services on a purely population basis.*'[170]

Raghunath Rai in his book *The History of Kashmir upto 1947* writes about All India Kashmir Conference on Page 279: "*The Kashmir Muslim leaders had lost the support and goodwill of the Punjabi Muslims who had so ardently espoused their cause. The All India Kashmir Committee who had been supported by the Anglo-Indian Press and had directed the Muslim agitation against the Dogra Rule in 1931 had lost its existence by June 1933. Sir Muhammed Iqbal resigned from the membership of the Committee protesting that it was a coterie of Ahmedias who were more interested in propagating their own religious beliefs and not helping the Kashmiri Muslims in the struggle for their political rights. In July 1933, the Committee was reconstituted and Muhammad Iqbal was elected its President but his attempt to keep the communal passions alive in the State proved futile."*

The second session of the All Jammu & Kashmir Muslim Conference was held at Mirpur from December 15 to 17, 1933, once again under Sheikh Abdullah's Presidentship but this session proved to be a total flop because the Muslim masses had lost faith in the cowardly leadership of Sheikh Abdulla who had been exposed as a Qadian agent. Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues delivered provocative speeches in triggering fresh communal tension in Mirpur. Fearing that he might be incarcerated for his anti-state speeches, Sheikh Abdullah again fled to Punjab to avoid his arrest.

The State Government published the Report of the Franchise Committee on January 20, 1934, which was rejected by the Muslims because '*the proposals of the Franchise Committee were most retrograde and would not benefit the Muslims.*'[171]

Without losing much time Sheikh Abdullah issued a statement warning both Hindus and Sikhs not to create obstacles for them in securing their legitimate right of self-determination. He said,"*The last three years must have made it clear that the Muslims can no longer be suppressed and no power on earth can keep them in check*". He concluded his statement by saying, "*That the recommendations of the Franchise Committee would not result in the promotion of an Assembly. So, the Muslims of the State must stand up and assert their right of selfdetermination with a strong will and get ready to make all sacrifices necessary for the cause!"*

Sheikh Abdullah's statement of Sheikh Abdulla was sufficient to create bad blood between the two communities in Srinagar. The State administration under Col. Colvin adopted stringent measures '*to prevent a serious breach of law and order'* and Regulation 19-L was once again promulgated to check the grim situation but Sheikh Abdullah slipped away from Srinagar to take shelter in Punjab[172]. Fresh violent disturbances erupted in Pulwama on February 2, 1934 and four days later people of Bijbahera adopted a menacing attitude. On the refusal of the crowds to disperse, the State force employed to control the situation resorted to firing, killing three of the rioters and wounding some others.

Allegations were levelled against the Colvin administration with regard to the brutal methods employed by it to quell the disturbances. State Government issued a communiqué on February 23, 1934, that the firing in Pulwama and Bijbehra during the first week of February was justified as the findings of the Magistrate showed that it was necessary to avoid further loss of life and property of the peace loving citizens[173].

For the fear of being arrested Sheikh Abdullah convened a meeting of the Working Committee of the Kashmir Muslim Conference on February 10, 1934, at Sialkot in Punjab to evaluate the situation that had developed in the State. Sheikh Abdullah prevailed on the Working Committee to suspend the agitation and initiate fresh negotiations with the State Government. Members rejected his suggestions because of his alliance with the Ahmedias. Instead the Committee of the Muslim Conference decided to suspend the entire Constitution of the Conference and deputed Ch. Ghulam Abbas of Jammu to head the Muslim Conference with the instructions that he should try to get the demands of the Muslims conceded through correspondence with the State Government and if his efforts did not prove fruitful, then he was at liberty to draw up a plan of Direct Action for launching the Civil Disobedience Movement inside the State[174]. Thus the mantle of leadership of the Muslim Conference passed into the hands of Jammu leaders.

After his arrival in Jammu from Sialkot, Ch. Ghulam Abbas wrote a letter to the Prime Minister of the State, Col. Colvin, recommending amendments in the proposals of the Franchise Committee besides the implementation of

the Glancy Commission. In his reply to Ch. Ghulam Abbas, Col. Colvin explained that he was ready to discuss the question of the nonimplementation of the Glancy Commission's recommendations, but he was not prepared to discuss the proposals for the Constitution of the Legislative Assembly[175]. The correspondence between the two resulted in a deadlock. Ch. Ghulam Abbas launched the Civil Disobedience Movement in accordance with the decision of the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference held in Sialkot[176]. Ch. Ghulam Abbas along with his colleagues was arrested and sentenced to one year's imprisonment. Thus the movement could not continue for more time and died a natural death in the normal course of short time.

In April 1934, Sheikh Abdullah in the capacity of President of the Muslim Conference formally withdrew the movement but before that he had double crossed the Jammu leadership. In the meantime, the State Government made an announcement regarding the constitution of the Legislative Assembly to be called the *Praja Sabha*, by the promulgation of Regulation No. I of 1991 A.V. The formation of the Legislative Assembly was delayed because of the disturbances created by the Muslim Conference in January 1934 over the Franchise Committee Report [177].

Praja Sabha:

In October 1934, Maharaja Hari Singh established the Legislative Assembly known as Praja Sabha consisting of 75 members out of which 33 were to be elected on a narrow franchise basis and only 3 per cent of the population was given the right to vote. Village and District headsmen, priests and managers of religious property, Title holders, pensioners, medical practitioners, lawyers and those who had qualified the Middle School Examination were eligible to vote. Women were debarred from voting on the ground that inclusion of women voters would increase the administrative difficulties for the elections[178].

The Praja Sabha was a deliberative body to move resolutions, introduce bills and to discuss the proposals of the budget. The Prime Minister appointed by the Maharaja had powers to return to the Praja Sabha for reconsideration of any bill passed by the Sabha along with amendments. In

case the Praja Sabha did not agree with the proposals of the government, the Maharaja could declare that the proposed legislation was essential for the good of the government, the bill could become an act.

The first elections under the Constitution were held in 1934. The institution of the Praja Sabha was an important step in the development of representation in the State as it provided a forum for the people representing the different communities to sit together and help the leading political party, the Muslim Conference, to understand their problems under which they were groaning[179].

Sheikh Abdullah's Muslim Conference was going to contest the forthcoming elections for the Praja Sabha even though none of the demands of the Conference regarding the amendment for the proposals of the Franchise Committee had been accepted by the State Government. Sheikh Abdullah's confidence shattered when he was not allowed to contest the elections as a candidate of the Conference because of his double standards when all the followers of Ch. Ghulam Abbas were cooling their heels in jail [180].

Maharaja Hari Singh inaugurated the State Legislative Assembly on October 17, 1934, in Srinagar. In his inaugural address to the Assembly, he said," *We recently expressed our wish and pleasure that means be designed whereby our people may be more closely associated in our Councils; and in pursuance of our commands, thus declared, those persons appointed by us to give practical shape to our wishes have submitted their recommendations which have been accepted by us."*

"The assemblage here present this day is the outcome of their labours to give outward form to our behests. It is the first of its kind in recent times; but of old, the duties which you will have to perform, were duties which were always shouldered and loyally discharge by the Praja Sabha ever since the institution of monarchy came into being in this ancient land of India. To acquaint themselves with the needs of their people, the Kings maintained bodies from village panchayats up to assemblies of this nature, composed of representatives of the various interests in their kingdom. Our own records bear witness to this."

“For our part, we declare that Divine Providence having laid upon us the record duty to care equally for all those committed to our guardianship, we can recognize no difference between one person and another, or between one class and another. They are all our beloved children, whatever their persuasions or creeds and we desire to protect, foster and advance them by every means in our power.”

“Out of the great love and affection we bear towards our beloved subjects, we have called you to do your part in working for the wellbeing of this State. We have allotted you your task and indicated the lines of the service you can render to yourselves and to your ruler, whose ordained duty is to safeguard and promote your best interests. We desire you to enter upon to discharge your responsibilities in such a way that your behaviour may be an example to others and your achievements at once a model for them to emulate and a monument to your own earnestness and your loyalty to the State that you serve.”

“Beware of impassioned utterances so much in vogue today. They invariably formulate unbalanced and impartial ideas that are as much divorced from decisive factors and stern realities as they are foreign to the genius of our race. Cultivate sobriety of thought and expression, shunning all that is disruptive and devote all your energies to creative and constructive work, which alone can help to ameliorate the lot and be conducive to the happiness, of those whose spokesmen you have undertaken to be.”
“With these words of counsel and admonition by which we hope to plant the feet of our beloved subjects on the path of solid progress and achievement, we hereby declare this Praja Sabha duly and well inaugurated and opened.”

“May the Dispenser of All Bounties in His infinite mercy and wisdom bless your labours and may those labours, conducted in perfect harmony, redound to the credit of your subjects, whose first chosen representations you are ,and to the glory of our unique heritage and of the body politic.”

The First formal session of the Praja Sabha began on October 19, 1934 and it concluded on November 2, 1934.

With the establishment of the Praja Sabha, the charismatic lusture of Sheikh Abdullah had faded away specially due to public attention having been diverted towards the introduction of reforms through the Praja Sabha.[182]

The Third Annual Session of the Kashmir Muslim Conference was held at Sopore from November 11 to 13, 1934, where the self-appointed President of the Muslim Conference, Sheikh Abdullah, was replaced by Mian Ahmed Yar as the new President. His thunder got totally eclipsed from the Kashmir political scene and he was reduced to the position of nonentity.

Lease of Gilgit:

Soon after the conclusion of the First Session of the Praja Sabha, the Prime Minister of the state, Col. Colvin, pressurized the Maharaja to lease out Gilgit to the British Indian Government. The British had started working for the transfer of Gilit Wazarat to the British Government in India as soon as they had secured entry into the State in the form of their military intervention which the Maharaja was forced to seek.[183] Further progress in the matter was delayed owing to the State Government's preoccupation with the establishment of the Legislative Assembly[184]. The Maharaja resisted this move for some time but when he was threatened with the dire consequences of dethronement from the Rulership of the State so he was left with no alternative but to lease out Gilgit Wazarat and its dependencies north of the Indus for a period of sixty years to the British Government.[185] The lease deed was inked on behalf of Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, by Lt. Col. L. E. Lang, the British Resident in Kashmir on March 26, 1935.

The Lease Deed between the Maharaja and the Viceroy runs as:

1. The Viceroy and Governor General of India may at any time after the ratification of this Agreement resume the civil and military administration of so much of the Wazarat of Gilgit Province of the State of Jammu & Kashmir as lies beyond the right bank of the river Indus but not withstanding anything in this agreement, the said territory shall continue to be included within the dominions of His Highness, the Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir.

2. Salutes and customary honours shall be paid in the said territory by the administration on the occasion of the Birthday of His Highness, on Baisakhi, Dusehra, Basant Panchmi and on such other occasions as may be agreed upon by His Highness and the Viceroy and the Governor General of India. The Flag of His Highness will be flown at the official headquarters of the Agency throughout the year.

3. In normal circumstances, no British or British Indian troops shall be despatched through that portion of the Wazarat of Gilgit Province, which lies beyond the left bank of the river Indus.

4. All rights pertaining to mining are reserved to His Highness, the Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir. The grant of prospective licenses and mining leases will not be made during the agreement mentioned.

5. The Agreement shall remain in force for 60 years from the date of its ratification and the lease will terminate at the end of that period.

This agreement was duly ratified by the Viceroy at Delhi on April 3, 1935, and the transfer was effected on August 1, 1935.

To achieve complete administrative control over the Gilgit Wazarat was the culmination of the ninety years itch and treacherous methods which the British employed to regain its control over Gilgit after they had ceded this territory to the Maharaja Gulab Singh after the conclusion of the Amritsar Treaty signed on March 16, 1846.

After the formal transfer of Gilgit to the British Government in India, they left the Maharaja to his own self to deal with the affairs of the State. Col. Colvin supported Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah in his every move to sideline the mischief capacity of Sheikh Abdullah and his Muslim Party because the utility of Sheikh Abdullah was no more required by them. The loss of Sheikh Abdullah’s leadership for the Kashmiris was the direct result of this policy adopted by Col. Colvin, the Prime Minister of the State.

The Governor General of India, Lord Linlithgow, visited Kashmir from October 13 to 23, 1936, to see for himself the transfer of Gilgit and to evaluate the dangers of Soviet Russia’s expanding policies.

Lt. Col. L.E. Lang, the British Resident in the Kashmir Durbar who had perfected the transfer of Gilgit was replaced by Lt. Col. J.W. Thomson Glover and Col. Colvin was reverted to join the British Indian Service in February 1937. Nawab Khusro Jung officiated as the Minister-in-waiting till the appointment of Sir N. Gopalswamy Ayengar as the Prime Minister of the State on April 7, 1937. He made drastic changes in the administration by curbing lawlessness and purged the rowdy element with an iron hand. Between August 1935 when Gilgit was leased out to the British and February 1937, when Col. Colvin actually was asked to join the Indian Civil Service, happened to be the lean period of Sheikh Abdullah's political career because Punjabi Muslims had started to treat him lopsidedly.[186]

A serious situation had developed in Jammu after the appointment of Sheikh Abdul Qaiyyam as the new Chief Justice of the State High Court in succession to Sir Barjor Dalal on November 23, 1936. A Muslim in Jammu had killed a cow and for his heinous sin he was awarded the normal sentence of seven years as the Dogra rulers of the State had to take an oath of protecting the cow, the Brahmin and the Hindu shrines at the time of their coronation. Ch.Ghulam Abbas argued the case of the culprit before Sheikh Abdul Qaiyyam and Pt. Kishan Lal Kitchlu in a review petition appearing as Counsel for the appellant, Ch. Ghulam Abbas contended that the cow had grown old and thus was an economic burden for the culprit so the case be treated leniently. After listening to the arguments and considering the financial status of the culprit, Sheikh Abdullah Qaiyyam reduced the sentence to one year. Sheikh Abdullah exhumed fire by his rhetoric when in his Presidential address to the Annual Session of the Muslim Conference in early 1937, raised the question of amendment in the existing cow slaughter law because he wanted to get this law annulled. This sparked a great controversy for Hindus of Jammu when a sinister attempt was made to amend this law through the State High Court.

Considering this judgement as an attack on the Fundamental Right of the Hindus, Kaviraj Vishnu Gupta along with his striking colleagues were arrested on the charges of contempt of court and this was the signal for an agitation. As a result of the arrest, Jammu observed a complete hartal for a period of one month and the entire business transactions came to a grinding halt. The percussion of this agitation was felt not only inside the State but

also over British India and leaders like Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya whole heartedly supported this movement. To pacify the agitators, the State Government issued a communiqué convincing them that "*The High Court Judgment in this particular case would not be treated as a precedent to be followed in future prosecutions for cow slaughter and this particular judgment did not involve any change in the Cow Slaughter Law.*"[186A]. This assurance conveyed through the communiqué had the desired effect. The agitation was withdrawn and the arrested leaders were released forthwith. So Sheikh Abdullah's somersault of amending the said law bore no fruit.

The Sixth Session of the Kashmir Muslim Conference was held in Jammu on March 26 and 27,1938, under the Presidentship of Sheikh Abdullah wherein a resolution at this Session, a change in the nomenclature and constitution of the Muslim Conference was proposed. But this resolution was outrightly rejected by the other members of the Muslin Conference. Sheikh Abdullah had realized that with all external aid shut out, no movement in Kashmir would be possible without the support of the local Hindus[188]. The need of the hour was that he should sever his connections with the Muslim Conference in Kashmir and Muslim League in India [189]. Then he would be able to garner the support of the Hindus in the State and the support of the Indian National Congress in particular.

A meeting of the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference was held on June 28, 1938, in Srinagar and the following resolution was passed: "*The Working Committee recommends to the General Council that in the forthcoming Annual Session of the Conference, the name and Constitution of the organization be so altered and amended that all such people who desire to participate in the political struggle may easily become members of the Conference irrespective of their caste, creed or religion*".

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT DAY

The Jammu & Kashmir Muslim Conference Party observed 'Responsible Government Day' on August 15, 1938, where the following resolution was adopted: "*This meeting of the people places on record its complete repudiation of the present system of irresponsible government and wishes to express its faith in establishing a complete 'Responsible Government'*

which alone can cure the ills of the people. The gathering appeals to all patriotic persons to muster support under the banner of ***Freedom and Struggle for Liberty.*** *Victory of the struggle alone would usher a complete political, economic and social emancipation."*

THE NATIONAL DAY

The prominent leaders of the Muslim Conference, Sheikh Abdullah, Maulana Mohammed Sadiq and Miyan Ahmed Yar, Mirza Afzal Beg had published a manifesto known as the "National Demand" which runs as:

" *As is now well-known, there is a national movement afoot among the people of Jammu & Kashmir to bring about a complete change in the social and political outlook of the people. This movement is not confined to any particular community or section of the public but all classes of people have started participating in it, with fullest consciousness of the issues it involves. But we do make it perfectly clear at the very outset that our loyalty to His Highness's person and throne is unswerving and need no reiteration. The ultimate goal of this movement is the achievement of complete Responsible Government under the aegis of His Highness. But as sponsors of this National Movement, we feel that it is our duty to acquaint our countrymen of the immediate objectives we have in view."*

In a meeting with Pt. Nehru in January 1938, Sheikh Abdullah was assured of the Congress support in his struggle to achieve the goal of 'Responsible Government' if he changed the banner of Muslim Conference to some secular name [190].

First session of the newly elected Second Praja Sabha commenced in Srinagar on September 17, 1938. As Mian Ahmed Yar rose to make a protest against the repressive policies of the Government he was restricted to make a statement. As a result the members of the Muslim Conference Party along with two elected members from Poonch boycotted the entire proceedings of the Praja Sabha but the Praja Sabha went ahead with its legislative business which concluded on 5th October 5, 1938 [191].

JAIL OR JUNGLE

In an interview with the Prime Minister of the State, Mr. Gopalaswamy Ayenger, after his release from the jail towards the end of February 1939, Sheikh Abdullah proudly introduced him as "*The Lion of Kashmir*" or "*Sher-e-Kashmir*". Mr. Ayenger point blank told him that for a lion, there were two places to live either Jail or Jungle whichever he would like to prefer? Mr. Ayenger advised him to behave sensibly in future and after that Sheikh Abdullah remained vigilant and played safe as far as possible. Mr. Ayenger warned him to shun the old path of Muslim communalism.

The agitation for self-government assumed State wide-support after the Harihar Session of the Indian National Congress. In 1939, the agitation for self-government 'culminated in the formation of the National Conference which pledged itself to the achievement of a united and independent India and a system of responsible government inside the State

192.

After his tour of the North-West Frontier areas with Pt. Nehru, Sheikh Abdullah availed the opportunity for setting into motion the process of effecting change in the name of the Muslim Conference that had become a necessity of aligning himself with the activities of the Indian National Congress.

Sheikh Abdullah's association with Pt. Nehru, opened a new chapter of relations which lasted till August 1953, when he was arrested for his anti-State activities. The name of the Kashmir Muslim Conference was changed to Jammu & Kashmir National Conference on June 11, 1939. A session of the Muslim Conference was held under the Presidentship of Ghulam Mohammed Sadiq on June 10, 1939, to decide about the change in the name and constitution of the Muslim Conference so that a non-communal colour could be given to this organization. The resolution for amendment was discussed among the 176 delegates at the opening session of the Conference but Ch. Hamid Ullah stoutly opposed the change.

The resolution was passed after opposition from some members and it laid down that every citizen irrespective of his religion or race be entitled to become its member provided he had to struggle hard for the establishment of a 'Responsible Government' in the State[192]. The idea of associating

Hindus in the Muslim struggle against the Hindu ruler had, in fact, originated from the mentor of the Muslim League way back in 1936 when Mohammed Ali Jinnah advised the Kashmiri leadership to win the confidence of the non-Muslims to achieve their goal[193]. Prem Nath Bazaz, Jia Lal Kilam, Kashyap Bandhu and Sardar Budh Singh were nominated the members of the Working Committee of the National Conference. Though there was change in the name of the party but at heart it remained the same old organization of fending anti-Hindu feelings and communal in nature. Staunch Kashmiri communalists condemned the change in the name of the Muslim Conference at Mujahid Manzil on June 15, 1939, because the leadership of the Muslim Conference had betrayed their confidence[194]. The entire Muslim Press condemned the change in the name of the Party.

New Constitution, 1939

Maharaja Hari Singh repealed the previous Constitution Regulation I of 1991S and promulgated the Jammu & Kashmir Constitution Act XIV of 1996S on September 7, 1939, which was a comprehensive constitutional enactment embodying various provisions regarding the executive, the legislative and the judicature of the State. The powers reserved by the ruler under the constitution of 1934 were retained by him and no change was effected in the composition, appointment and the tenure of the Council of Ministers.

The Reform Act of 1939 increased the number of elected members of the Praja Sabha from 33 to 40. The new Constitution did not give any specific powers to the Praja Sabha while it remained only a consultative body as before. The Praja Sabha was empowered to make laws for the State-subjects with the exception of some non-votable items.[195]

i. The new Constitution of 1939 gave certain financial powers to the Praja Sabha.

ii. The Council of Ministers was vested with the powers to authorize demands which the Sabha refused to pass in case that was found necessary for the conduct of the administration in the State.

iii. The Act provided for the consolidation of the law relating to the High Court and the appointment of a Board of Judicial Advisors to advise the Ruler in all cases of appeal referred to him.

iv. The Constitution Act did not provide for any change in the extent and nature of franchise and the distribution of the electorates."

Under the Constitution Act of 1939, the High Court was vested with the highest judicial functions in the State in all matters of original and appellate jurisdiction.[196]

The leaders of the Azad Muslim Conference and the Indian Muslim League unit in the State were specific in their criticism of the Constitutional Act of 1939 because it did not provide for the introduction of the Responsible Government in the State and they were rendered politically subservient to the Hindus in the State.[197]

National Conferernce

The first general session of the National Conference was held at Anantnag from September 30 to October 2, 1939 wherein the capacity of the President of the organization Sheikh Abdullah, 'openly supported the movement for political reform in the Indian States led by the All India States' People's Conference and called for the consolidation of the movements in all the Indian States to liberate the people from tyranny and oppression.[198] The second resolution adopted at this session was 'a request to the Ruler of the State, to introduce responsible government in the State. By another resolution the National Conference praised the statement issued by the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress with regard to the war and against the British policy for the aspiration of the Indian people.[199] These resolutions virtually displeased a section of Muslims who had supported the change in the name of the party with the condition that the communal colour would be maintained.[200] It created an impression that the National Conference had become a spokesperson for the Indian National Congress.

The rift in the National Conference continued to surface as the leanings of Sheikh Abdullah towards the Indian National Congress became more pronounced and the supporters of the Muslim League drifted away from them[201]. Ch. Hamidullah, Ch. Ghulam Abbas and Alla Rakha Sagar and some other members of the National Conference decided to part ways with the National Conference. The crisis in the National Conference further deepened when at the Annual Session of the All India Muslim League in Lahore, the League adopted the momentous resolution for the creation of a separate independent State for the Muslims in India on March 22, 1940[202]. The senior leaders of the National Conference including Ch. Hamidullah, Ch. Ghulam Abbas and Alla Rakha Sagar refused to accept the secular overture tendency of the National Conference and pledged their support for a separate homeland for the Indian Muslims. After that they broke their relations with the National Conference.

Pt. Nehru accompanied by Khan Ghaffar Khan, the Frontier Gandhi, visited Kashmir in May 1940 and Sheikh Abdullah gave them a rousing reception which further created uneasiness among the new entrants of the Party and thus upset the balance. Ch. Hamid Ullah, a committed supporter of the Muslim League, had supported Sheikh Abdullah and other leaders of the National Conference on the condition not to lean towards the Indian National Congress.[203] Finally Ch. Ghulam Abbas with his coterie broke away from the National Conference and once again revived the Muslim Conference on October 10, 1940[204]. The revival of the Muslim Conference in Jammu gave a setback to the National Conference and the influence of the National Conference was tremendously reduced in Jammu.

A meeting of the Working Committee of the National Conference was held at Mirpur on December 28, 1939, in which the Committee members vehemently resented the exclusion of the recognized Court Language of the State, the Hindustani from the list of both compulsory and optional subjects prescribed for the Kashmir Civil Service examination and strongly urged its inclusion as one of the compulsory subjects.[205] The resolution virtually meant the replacement of Urdu in the Persian script by Hindustani. The passing of this resolution gave a strong handle to the opponents of Sheikh Abdullah to protest against his new garb as a nationalist and exposed the real communal character of the party. Sheikh Abdullah was losing his

importance in Kashmir because Hindus and Sikh members of the Working Committee were too big a burden for him.[206]

Second World War

When the negotiations between Britain and Germany ended without any consensus on August 23, 1939, pledging his support as a tributary State to the British crown, Maharaja Hari Singh reacted to the tense situation in Europe and sent the following telegram to the Viceroy of India on August 24, 1939:[206]

" *I do desire Your Excellency, and through you the King Emperor, to know that if war comes, Kashmir may be depended upon to do what Kashmir has ever done since coming under the aegis of His Britannic Majesty, and of course my personal services are always and will be in event of war, at his Majesty's disposal."*

The Viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow, announced over the All India Radio on September 3, 1939, at 8.30 pm that the Government of his Majesty '*was engaged in war'* with Germany.[207] The Maharaja made a fervent appeal to all the Dogras and Rajputs to enlist in the Army for the defence of the right and just cause for which the British crown was fighting.[208] Jammu & Kashmir Praja Sabha endorsed the Maharaja's appeal on September 18, 1939: *"The Praja Sabha, representing all classes, communities and interests in the State expresses its unflinching devotion to Your Highness and support wholeheartedly Your Highness's determination to offer all the resources of the State, both in men and material, in the furtherance of the righteous cause, in which the armies of His Majesty, the King Emperor are engaged, namely the cause of prevalence of right over might and of upholding the reign of law over brute force."* Wazir of Poonch conveyed his feelings in a telegram regarding the recruitment in the Indian and State armies:"Kindly wire the number of Hindus and Muslims required from Poonch for emergency and other recruitments. Poonch can supply over ten thousand recruits"[209]. The Working Committee of the National Conference declared its support to the war efforts of the State Government but it also reflected its resentment over the special appeal made by the Maharaja of the Dogras and

Rajputs in the State to support the Allied war efforts, ignoring the Muslims of the State.

In the first five years of the war some
51,000 recruits were enrolled of which
6,000 joined the State forces and the rest joined the Indian Army.[210] Total eight units of the State forces participated in the war theatres at foreign fronts besides the first J&K Mountain Battery which formed a part of the 5th Indian Division, was mobilized for overseas services. Maharaja Hari Singh offered half a squadron of fighter air crafts to the Viceroy of India at the cost of $40,000/- for use in the war and placed his personal Lockheeds plane at the disposal of the Indian Government besides placing eight well equipped ambulance cars at the State's Kashmir House at Delhi.[211] In July 1940, the Maharaja appointed a War Aid Committee under the Presidentship of Maharani, Tara Devi, to raise funds and to prepare garments, scarfs, handkerchiefs, bandages for the use of State forces deployed on the overseas war front.[212] Indeed she did so well that she was awarded" *The Crown of India",* a decoration reserved for distinguished women and received earlier only by two or three other Indians.[212-A] Keeping in view the services rendered by Maharaja Hari Singh he was bestowed a unique honour by appointing him as a member of Winston Churchill's war Cabinet evidently one of those elaborate forces at which the Imperial British excelled, aimed at giving members of the British empire some sort of symbolic say in the affairs of the State without any real power to influence decisions.[213]

Maharaja Hari Singh paid a personal visit to Egypt in 1941 to boost the morale of the State forces and a contribution of $200 was made for the provisions of amenities to his troops in the Middle East as well.[214] The Commander of the Division stationed at Middle East, appreciated the standard of efficiency of the State forces under the skilled command of Lt.Col.Bhagwan Singh. General Sir Claude Auchinleck, Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Forces in the Middle East, conveyed his personal appreciation of J&K Mountain Battery and its accuracy of supporting the British infantry.[215]

In recognition of efficient services rendered by Lt.Col.Bhagwan Singh at foreign fronts, Maharaja Hari Singh sanctioned a hereditary jagir of Rs.3,600/on December 20,1941, in his favour which could be held by him and his male heirs in the direct line in perpetuity.[216]

Cripps Mission

In the first two years of the war, Great Britain suffered heavily due to Germanys deadly airstrikes which proved disastrous for her and it started fighting for her life at home. As a result of the debacles, she started losing her colonies in the East of Japan which was almost at the threshold of the Indian Empire. Setbacks suffered by Britain at the hands of Germany forced her to change the policy towards India and her freedom struggle, with this end in view, Sir Stafford Cripps was sent to India on a special mission for finding a just and final solution of the constitutional crisis.[217] Sir Stafford Cripps reached India on March 22, 1942, and brought a number of Constitutional and political reforms for India. The Cripps Mission envisaged the complete transfer of power to Indians after the war and partial transfer of power during the war and in return for this, Britain wanted the Indian leaders to support them for their victory in the war. The Cripps Mission had the following proposals for the Indian leaders:

1. The establishment of an elected body to frame a new Constitution of India immediately after the war was over.

2. The British Government undertook to accept this Constitution thus framed subject to the right of any province, not willing to accept the Constitution, to retain its present constitutional position (obviously this amounted to introduce Pakistan through the back door). As for the present, the Governor-General's Executive Council would be Indianized except for the Commander-in-Chief who would continue to hold charge of defence.[218]

There was a separate proposal for the Princely States in the Cripps Mission that those States joining the Union, paramountcy would automatically lapse and in the case of non-acceding States, the Crown would retain the means to implement its obligation and there would be no change on the question of paramountcy and other related matters except with their consent.[219] A

Princes delegation under the Chancellorship of Jam Sahib of Nawanagar met Sir Stafford Cripps on April 2, 1942, pleaded their case whether the States acceded or not they should have the right to negotiate for a Union of their own with full sovereign status.[220] The Indian National Congress rejected the proposals of the Cripps Mission for the following reasons:

i. It declared that the essential condition was the freedom of India before the war comes to an end because without this the Indians could not be moved into action;

ii. Indian public opinion insisted on popular control over defence;[221]

iii. 90 millions of States' population had no representation in the Cripps' proposals;[222]

iv. The principle of non-accession might be a severe blow to the conception of Indian unity.[223]

Quit India Movement 1942

After the wide range consultations of the Cripps Mission regarding the transfer of power with the Indian leaders concluded without any positive results. The Congress Working Committee met at Waroha on July 14, 1942, and adopted the famous "*Quit India*" Resolution. The All India Congress Committee endorsed the resolution of the Working Committee on August 7 and 8, 1942, at Bombay. The Congress Committee adopted a resolution on August 8, 1942, which stipulated:"*The Committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian government which dominates over it and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity. The Committee resolves to sanction for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the wildest possible scale, so that the country might use all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last 22 years of peaceful struggle.*

As a result of the Quit India movement which was launched under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, the British India Government arrested all

the prominent leaders of the Congress and imposed a complete ban on all Congress organizations throughout India.[224] The Congress leaders who escaped arrest hurriedly issued instructions to the people in a 'twelve point programme' in regard to the conduct of the Quit India Movement. In the twelve point programme people were exhorted to launch a non-violent Civil Disobedience Movement including boycotts, strikes, refusal to pay land revenue, manufacture of salt, strikes by government servants, blockades, processions and protests.[225] The arrest of the Congress leaders provoked widespread violence by the masses throughout the length and breadth of India and the Quit India Movement known as the August Revolution was suppressed with brute force. With less than three months Indians were subjected to extreme atrocities committed by the British Police force. As a result of this movement the war efforts of the government were seriously hampered by the apathy of the public and the Indian leaders but the Muslim League was cooperating with the Indian Government for their victory in the war.[226]

Mahatma Gandhi was released from jail in May 1944 when demanded by all sections of the Indians. The Governor-General of India, Lord Wavell, announced a plan to resolve the constitutional crisis and a Conference was held in Simla which was attended by the leading political parties of India.[227] Talks eventually broke down because the Muslim League did not allow the Congress to nominate a nationalist Muslim on the new Executive Council.[228].

Tremendous changes took place in British politics in England when Prime Minister Attlee formed his government by defeating the Conservative Party in the general elections and the new British Government decided to go ahead with its programme of giving self-government to India at the earliest possible.[229]

Even when the war was going on for their supremacy, the British Indian Government did not hesitate to put pressure on the Maharaja to remove Mr. Ayengar from the Prime Ministership of the State in April 1943 when Maharaja Hari Singh had placed all his sources at their disposal. It was said about Ayengar that he dealt even-handedly with violence no matter from which quarter it came and that the Muslim Conference and later on the

Muslim League believed that at the political level Ayengar was more inclined to favour the National Conference.[230] Eventually the British were not ready to support any movement in the State for a 'Responsible Government' as that would amount to support the freedom struggle in British India.

Roti Agitation

In the early forties Maharaja Hari Singh reshuffled the State Council of Ministers by appointing Pt. Ram Chanderkak as the Minister-in-Waiting on November 23, 1941, till then he had been serving the State Government in the capacity of its Chief Secretary, while Rai Bahadur, Himmat Singh, K. Maheshwari was inducted as the Revnue Minister on April 7, 1942. Justice Ganga Nath was elevated as the Chief Justice of the State High Court on June 24, 1942. After successfully serving the State as the Prime Minister of the State, Sir N. Gopalaswamy Ayyenger was succeeded by Raja Sir Maharaj Singh as the new Prime Minister of the State on April 9, 1943. For his utter failure in handling the affairs of the State and creating a messy position in Srinagar, Sir Maharaj Singh was asked to resign from his post after serving the State for a short tenure from April 9 to July 26, 1943. Sir Kailash Narian Haksar, who had served the Princely Native States, was the new incumbent to the post of Prime Minister of the State. He attacked the Muslim communalism for creating turbulence inside the State with an iron hand.

It was during the tenure of Sir Kailash Narian Haksar in September 1943 that the State felt the pinch of a steep rise in food prices. The backlash arose out of the huge quantities of food grains exported to Britain for its army on the war fronts without any payment in return. West Bengal suffered the worst type of famine in the later part of 1943 taking the toll of millions of human lives along with the other part of India also suffered heavily so the State could not escape being affected by the spiralling rise in prices.[232] The Government failed to regulate supplies of food stuffs in the Jammu province and the entire province was gripped by famine. Jammu city was the worst effected. Within days, a severe cholera epidemic broke out in the city and people died in hundreds. Kailash Narian Haksar sent his Revenue Minister, Himmat Singh to Jammu to make an on the spot enquiry. No steps

were taken to send succor to relieve the distress of Jammu people[232-A]. The people of Jammu were on the boil following the scarcity of food grains and the steep rise in prices. A procession was taken out in the city on September 23, 1943, under the active leadership of Kaviral Vishnu Gupta and Mr.Gopal Dutt Mengi of the Hindu Sikh Naujawan Sabha, demanding the supply of cheap food grains in the city. The City Magistrate stopped the procession from moving ahead and ordered its dispersal. Both the leaders of the Sabha were detained under the Jammu & Kashmir Defence Rules enforced two days ago as precautionary steps to curb any untoward happening in the city. Arrests of the leaders infuriated the masses which were followed by a massive demonstration and the processionists marched towards the City Police Station to lodge the protest on September 24, 1943. The local authorities became jittery after seeing the surging crowds and they ordered a lathicharge on the unruly mob. The processionists retaliated by burning down the car of the District Magistrate and the police had to take shelter inside the Police Station till reinforcements reached to tackle the situation. Finding the situation going out of control, the firing was ordered which claimed nine lives and several people were wounded seriously. The spree of shooting by the armed cops continued inside the bylanes and the Assistant Superintendent of Police, Pt. Raghunath Kaul, chased the retreating crowds and shot them from a close distance.

A message from the Maharaja Hari Singh was read out by the President of the Praja Sabha, Wazir Ganga Nath when its Autumn Session started in Srinagar on September 25, 1943:

“Information reached me last night that quite unexpected developments have taken place in Jammu city, the cause of which it is impossible to imagine but is essential to determine after a sifting enquiry on the spot. The Revenue Minister or the Prime Minister or both should proceed to Jammu for the purpose of such an enquiry and of the action called for on the occasion. I, therefore, declare the Praja Sabha prorogued till Monday, the October 4,1943, from which date I hope that it will be able to carry on the business of this session without interruption.”

Maharaja Hari Singh sanctioned two lakhs from his Privy Purse for the relief purpose caused by the scarcity of food supply in Jammu while

Maharani Tara Devi and Yuvraj, Karan Singh contributed Rupees five thousand each for the relief purpose of the distressed people.[233] The Maharaja ordered that it was the duty of every State Government officer to see that no person died on account of starvation and the failure to discharge the solemn responsibility would entail grave consequences.[234] Members of the Praja Sabha from Jammu, Pt. Prem Nath Dogra, Doctor Balram Das, Lala Shiv Nath Nanda and Sheikh Mohd. Amin, visited the places where the atrocities had been committed on the agitators. Khawja Ghulam Mohd Sadiq and Mirza Afzal Beg were asked by Sheikh Abdullah to evaluate the circumstances which led to the firing on the victims. The agitating crowds were assured by the Prime Minister, and other members of the Praja Sabha that whosoever found guilty would be severely dealt after the report by the Enquiry Committee.[235] Thus the Civil Disobedience Movement was withdrawn from Jammu and complete normalcy was restored in the city.

The former Justice of the Bombay High Court, Sir Govind Madgonkar, was appointed to preside over the Enquiry Committee which also included the former Judge of the Patna High Court, Dr.P.K.S.Sen.[236] Mr. Kazi Masood Hassan, member of the Board of Judicial Advisors, was appointed as its member. The Enquiry Committee after recording the evidence of about 250 members of the public and about 200 from the police submitted its report to Maharaja Hari Singh on January 5, 1944.[237] Dr. Saif-ud-Din Kitchloo, Ch. Ghulam Abbas and Advocate Lala Roop Chand Nanda argued the case on behalf of the Public Relief Committee while Advocate Lok Nath Sharma and Advocate Pt. Madhoo Sadan appeared on behalf of the government.[237] Advocate Lala Roop Chand Nanda, held the Governor of Jammu, Major Pritam Singh and Senior Superintendent of Police, Sardar Prithi Nandan Singh for dereliction of duty. Pt. Satya Lal, Additional District Magistrate, 3. Khan Abdul Hakim Durrani, the City Magistrate, Lala BaijNath, District Superintendent of Police, Pt. Kailash Nath Bhakri, Assistant Superintendent of Police and Mian Sayeed Ali, the City Inspector, all these officers complicated the whole affair, used excessive force to curb the demonstration and ruthlessly handled the situation.

Sir Govind Madgonkar, Presiding Officer of the Enquiry Committee, made the following recommendations about the actual happenings of September 23 and 24, 1943:

1. That Pandit Raghunath Kaul, Assistant Superintendent of Police and fourteen armed guard constables should be dismissed from the Police force;

2. That Lala Baijnath, District Superintendent of Police, should be severely censured and to be retired as soon as he had served the period necessary for full pension;

That Inspector Sayeed Ali should be severely censured;
5.

6.
4. That Pt. Satya Lal Raina, the Additional District Magistrate should not be given any executive office of responsibility;

That Head Constable Nazir Hussain Shah, was found guilty of using unnecessary force in making searches and arrests, should be dismissed from the Police force;

That Major Pritam Singh, the District Magistrate and Sardar Prithi Nandan Singh, the Senior Superintendent of Police, should be severely censured because they avoided the responsibility and failed to take the command of the situation at the City Chowk.
7. That compensation should be

awarded to the injured persons and to the dependents of those killed in the firing.[238]

Maharaja Hari Singh accepted all the above recommendations except the one regarding the dismissal of the fourteen armed guard constables who acted on the orders of the Officer-in-charge.[239] The the Maharaja expressed his sympathies for those innocent victims of the unhappy incident of September 24, 1943 and Maharaja relieved his Revenue Minister, Himmat Singh K. Mahshwari, from the Council of Ministers, his leave and salary due to him were forfeited. On February 9, 1944, Sir B. N. Rau, a retired Judge of the Calcutta High Court, was appointed the Prime Minister of the State to succeed Sir Kailash Narian Haksar after his termination. And later on when the Prime Minister’s Committee for Honours and Civil Awards was formed on February 13, 1948, Sir, B.N. Rau was appointed its

Chairman. The Committee submitted its report about how to bestow the prestigious awards on March 9, 1948. National Awards were instituted in 1954 and the objectives for conferment of these awards were codified in 1955 through four Presidential proclamations. Those who were eminently suitable to be the first to receive were:

1. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan;
2. C. Rajagopalachari and
3. C.V. Raman.

Jinnah and Kashmir

Some prominent Muslim League leaders from Punjab, Raja Gaznaffar Ali Khan, Mian Mumtaz Daultana and Nawab of Mamdot, held secret meetings with the emissaries of Sheikh Abdullah and with senior leaders of the Muslim Conference in Srinagar in October 1943.[241] Even the President of the National Conference, Sardar Budh Singh was kept in the dark about the meetings. The League leaders explained to them that the internecine strife among Muslim and the division between the National Conference and the Muslim Conference had hampered the interests of the Muslims in the State.[242] The League leaders advised Sheikh Abdullah and his associates to seek Jinnah's advice in bringing about unity among the Muslims in the State to contain the Rajput absolutism of the Dogras.[243] Sheikh Abdulla and Maulana Mohammed Sayeed visited Lahore to plead with Jinnah to act as an arbitrator between the two parties of the Kashmiri Muslims.[244] Jinnah in unambiguous terms told the Conference leaders that he and the Muslim League would not accept any constitutional structure for India which did not provide for the separation and independence of the Muslim majorityprovince.[245] He, without mincing any words, told them that he would like the Muslims in the State to unite and support the Muslim League struggle for Pakistan and offered the Conference leaders his unstinted support in their struggle for Constitutional reforms.[246]

He accepted their invitation to visit Kashmir soon after his arrival in Srinagar on May 10, 1944, Sheikh Abdullah welcomed Mr. Jinnah on behalf of the National Conference and eulogized his services in his welcome address. Mr. Jinnah expressed his gratitude at the warmth of the

welcome and advised them to remain united and warned them to delink the Conference from the Indian National Congress.[247]

Mr. Jinnah attended the Annual Session of Muslim Conference held in the Park outside the Jama Masjid on June 16 and 17, 1944. The representatives of the Muslim Conference in a meeting with the Prime Minister of the State secured his permission on the condition that a public procession would not be taken out in the City which may lead to trouble between the two organizations.[248] Replying to an address of welcome, Mr. Jinnah spoke his mind at the end of the session: "You should awaken and instil life in the dead bones of the Muslim nation. This goal cannot be attained without unity. With this end in view, you should establish one platform and one organization and rally round one banner and that Muslim Conference is alone the representative of the State." Obviously Jinnah wanted Sheikh Abdullah to wind up his National Conference and merge it with the Muslim Conference. 'Known for changing colours with the ease of a chameleon, Sheikh Abdullah not only turned down the suggestion offhand but also used 'language of a most offensive and vituperative character' against the one he praised only a few hours back.[249]

At a public meeting at Khanyar on June 20, 1944, Sheikh Abdullah lambasted Jinnah's attempt in interfering in the politics of the State and asked him to leave the State otherwise be prepared to face the dire consequences.[250] He used filthy language against Mr. Jinnah forgetting that it was he who had invited him to bring the two organizations into close contact.[251]

On the eve of his departure from Srinagar on June 24, 1944, Mr. Jinnah issued statement to the Press in which he alleged:"Sheikh Abdullah and the Muslim Conference discussed with me the matters of their concern in Delhi and in Lahore before my arrival here and they were good enough to accord me a grand reception and were anxious that I should hear both sides and bring about a settlement. I suggested that the Muslims should organize themselves under one flag and one platform, my advice to Sheikh Abdullah was unacceptable. He indulged in all sorts of language of a most offensive and vituperative character in attacking me. My advice to Muslims is that the differences can be resolved through arguments, not by goondaism and one

thing that I must draw the attention of the Kashmir Government is that goondaism must be put down at any cost and there should be a constitutional liberty of speech and freedom of thought which is the fundamental right of every citizen under any civilized form of government."

Sheikh Abdullah reacted that he could not accept the League demand for Muslim separatism as the 'National Conference has been based on the principles of national unity and no leader had the power to change its commitments.' The National Conference would never support the demand for the division of the country and it stood for a united India. By aligning with Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Sheikh Abdulla never wanted to go into the labyrinths of history.

Dyarchy

After his arrival in the State on June 22, 1944, supervising the magnificent performance of his troops at foreign fronts constantly for three months in the capacity of Churchill's war Minister, the people of the State decided to give Maharaja Hari Singh a rousing reception. Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference also decided to join the celebration who had opposed associating themselves in any way to welcome the Maharaja since 1931.[253] Jinnah had been in Srinagar for the last one and a half months during which he made a futile bid to sell the two-nation theory to Sheikh Abdullah.[254] Jinnah wanted to have an audience with the Maharaja but he declined to see him citing the reason that he had lately arrived from foreign fronts and administration required his attention. The Muslim Conference also jumped into the celebrations to win the favours of the Maharaja.

The Maharaja went round the city in his car through streets decorated with flags, buntings and photographs and people welcomed him shouting pro-Maharaja slogans.[255] Sheikh Abdullah personally presented the *New Kashmir Plan* to the Maharaja after garlanding him when the royal procession passed by the Mujahid Manzil.[256] In order to win the Maharaja's favour, the New Kashmir Plan had provided for the perpetuation of the Dogra dynasty as a Constitutional Monarchy in the party's future policy and programme.[257]

Maharaja Hari Singh consulted Sir Taj Bahadur Sapru, a legal luminary of his times, to introduce more constitutional reforms in the State with a view to make his administration more popular by associating people's representatives in the State Cabinet.[258] The Maharaja asked the Praja Sabha members to prepare a panel of six members in such a way that three members were included from the two provinces, out of which His Highness would select two members to be appointed in his Council of Ministers.[259] Out of the six members Maharaja Hari Singh appointed Mirza Afzal Beg, the Deputy leader of the National Conference Party, as the Minister for Public Works, Municipalities, Town Areas, Property in British India, Stationery and Printing portfolios while Wazir Ganga Ram was appointed as Home Minister with portfolios of Education, Archeology, Museums and Libraries, Medical and Jails, Agriculture, Civil and Veterinary and Cooperative Department on October 19, 1944.[260] In a largely attended public meeting at Gobagh, Sheikh Abdullah applauded the Maharaja's initiative by democratizing the State administration by including the public men in the State Government. Speaking on behalf of the Muslim Conference Group in the Praja Sabha, Ch. Hamid Ullah Khan was no less eloquent. "Our beloved ruler by taking this definite progressive step, of which any Indian State may well feel proud, has given two representatives of this House an opportunity of participating in his administration, thereby graciously bestowing a great honour on all the other members of the House."[261]

The Maharaja could have delayed this progressive process as the Second World War was still on and would have continued with his old administrative machinery without changing it. But he went ahead with his slew of reforms.

With the acceptance of office by the National Conference, the New Kashmir Manifesto was thrown on the backburner and nobody cared to bother for it.

Maharaja Hari Singh took another significant step in June 1945 when he altogether brought to an end the practice of importing Prime Ministers from British India on June 25, 1945, the Maharaja appointed Pt. Ram Chander Kak, his Minister-in-Waiting as his Prime Minister only to succeed to Sir

B.N.Rau.[262] The appointment of Pt. Kak as the Prime Minister was hailed all over the State and the political atmosphere started improving in the State.[263]

The next Annual Session of the National Conference was held at Sopore from August 3 to 5, 1945, which was attended by Pt. Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Frontier Gandhi. Pt. Nehru made an appeal to the audience to rally round Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference which was the answer to all their evils. He warned the people against falling victims to the narrow minded communal and sectarian politics and asked the Kashmiri Pandits in particular to leave Kashmir if they did not join the National Conference.[264] The visit by the Congress leaders created a congenial position for Sheikh Abdullah for the time being while the Muslim Conference was temporarily dumped.

With the appointment of Mirza Afzal Beg and Wazir Ganga Ram as the popular Ministers with effect from October 21^{t}, 1944, the Maharaja had ensured smooth sailing which, however, proved too short lived for him.[265]

Mirza Afzal Beg wrote a letter to Pt. Ram Chander Kak on January 15, 1946, complaining that:

1. He was not entitled to speak and vote in the Praja Sabha;
2. He had not been given a separate secretariat;

3. A proposal for delegations of powers under the Municipal Act made by him, had not been pursued;

4. He had not been consulted on matters relating to law and order even when restrictions had been imposed under the Defence Rules at a number of places including his own Constituency.

Pt. Kak replied to the objections raised by Mirza Afzal Beg on February 7, 1946, one by one;

1. So far as the right to vote in Assembly was concerned, there was no question of the Ministers appointed by the Maharaja being given the

freedom to vote and speak in the Praja Sabha independent of the decision of the government;

2. With regard to the question of providing a separate Secretariat, he informed Mr. Beg that his position was exactly the same as that of his other colleagues but he had been provided the services of a personal assistant of his choice;

3. With regard to the question of delegating powers under the Municipal Act, he was informed that the Law Department had not accepted Mirza Afzal Beg's views that powers be delegated to him under the provisions of the Act;

4. With regard to the enforcement of Defence Rules, he was informed that the discretion to enforce emergency laws were vested with the District Magistrate and the police by statutes rules on orders of the government.[266]

Mirza Afzal Beg resigned from his Ministership on March 17, 1946, after serving his office for about a year and a half. Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference Party raised a hue and cry by making statements and tried to exploit the situation created by Mirza Beg's resignation. But Prime Minister Pt. Ram Chander Kak, disturbed their plans by appointing Mian Ahmed Yar, the leader of the National Conference Party in the Praja Sabha, whose right to become the Minister earlier had been scuttled by his party.[267] The official announcement about Mian Ahmed Yar's appointment was made on April 15, 1946, while the National Conference Party accused him of having turned traitor to his Party.[268] The government headed by Pt. Kak struck a severe blow to the prestige of the Conference and possibly sown dissension among its ranks and gradually stiffened its attitude towards the National Conference.[269] Sheikh Abdullah sought an interview with the Maharaja but he refused to see him as it was his normal practice not to interfere in the function of his government.

The Cabinet Mission

Tremendous changes had taken place in British Politics where the Labour Party defeated the Conservative Party in the General Elections. On his arrival in India, Lord Wavell, the Governor-General of India, announced

that the British Government was convinced of the imperative necessity of granting India complete self-government as early as possible [270]. The new British Government of Prime Minister Attlee declared in the House of Commons in February, 1946 to send a Cabinet Mission to India consisting of a Secretary of State, Lord Pethic Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps, President of Board of Trade and A. V. Alexander, First Lord of Admirality.[271] The Cabinet Mission arrived in India on March 23, 1946, a week after Mirza Afzal Beg had relinquished his office and held a Conference with four representatives, two each of the Congress and Muslim League respectively but which could not reach any final conclusion.[272] The Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946 was, in fact, the first important statement of the British Government regarding the future of Indian States in an independent federal structure.[273]

The Cabinet Mission refused to recognize the demand for the division of India and the creation of a separate Muslim State and in relation to the States, the Cabinet Mission reflected the devious policies of the British Government and indicated that the British Government would neither retain the powers of the paramountcy nor transfer the rights arising out of Paramountcy to the proposed Union.[274] The Cabinet Mission underlined the lapse of Paramountcy and the right of the Princes to accede to the Union or assume independence.[275]

While the Cabinet Mission continued its parleys with different political parties in India, States representatives and various administrative bodies, events of far reaching importance were taking place in Jammu and Kashmir.[276]

The debacle of Dyarchy proved to be a catalytic impetus to the National Conference and it declared in unequivocal terms the right of the States people all over India to see the dissolution of Paramountcy, the liquidation of the Princely order, and the right of the people of the Indian States to join the Indian Union and to participate in any Constitution making body.[277]

Sheikh Abdullah on the advice of his communist friends decided to make a direct approach to the British Government for handing over power in Kashmir on the plea that the Treaty of Amritsar by which the Dogra ruler

had obtained de jure control over Kashmir, would have no validity after the British had left.[277-A]

Sheikh Abdullah, the President of the National Conference, sent a telegram to the Cabinet Mission, explaining the principles which the National Conference wanted the Mission to adopt in relation to the Jammu & Kashmir State. In a detailed memorandum submitted to the Cabinet Commission by the National Conference in which it questioned the validity of the Treaty of Amritsar by virtue of which the Jammu & Kashmir State was ceded to the Dogra ruler and claimed consideration for the right of the people of the State to self determination.[278]

Quit Kashmir Movement

Sheikh Abdullah's last phase of opposition to the Dogra ruler was his agitation in May 1946, put forth in the slogan of '**Quit Kashmir Movement'** and he tried to equate this movement with the Quit India Movement launched by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi to oust the British from the Indian soil in August 1942.[279] On May 15, 1946, Sheikh Abdullah outlined the objectives of the Quit Kashmir Movement and asked the Kashmiris to prepare for the last battle against the Dogra rule.[280] He explained the political context of the freedom struggle in the Indian States and described the Indian Princely System as the outerflank of British colonialism in India.[281] In a public speech in Srinagar,he openly demanded the repudiation of the Amritsar Treaty, dissolution of the Dogra rule and further said that, time had come for the Dogras to quit Kashmir.[282] Sheikh Abdullah's Quit Kashmir Movement was to seek for the people of the State '*their right to absolute freedom from the autocratic rule of Maharaja Hari Singh*'.[283]

'The Quit Kashmir Movement was directed against the Maharaja Hari Singh asking him to quit from his own soil whom the Maharaja represented as an independent sovereign ruler, who never went against the wishes of his subjects, who never nourished anti-Indian feelings, who was himself deadly against the British rule in India and above all who had supported the cause of India's freedom at the First Round Table Conference held in the

heartland of the British Empire.[284] never cared to consult this organization when this Memorandum was being drafted.

Among the Hindus in Jammu the Quit Kashmir Movement evoked a very limited response as they were not ready to rise against the Dogra rule and eventually the leaders in Jammu who had worked for the National Conference were embarrassed at the sudden turn of events and eruption of revolt against the Dogra ruler.[286]

The Kashmir Muslim Conference stoutly opposed this movement under the directions of Mohd. Ali Jinnah and dubbed this movement as Congress inspired to rehabilitate the lost prestige of the National Conference among the Kashmiri Muslims.[287]

When the Congress leaders came to know about the new development in Kashmir, Pt. Nehru condemned the intransigent attitude of the State Government, and demanded the withdrawal of the repressive methods the State Government had adopted in curbing the movement and accused the State Government of having acted on the instigation of the Political Department of India and the British Resident of the State.[288]

The Quit Kashmir Movement memorandum submitted by Sheikh Abdullah to the British Cabinet Mission was a rude shock to the rank and file of the National Conference because none of them had been taken into confidence while drafting this memorandum. It was a complete reversal of the policy of the National Conference, which had throughout stood for the 'Responsible Government' under the aegis of Maharaja Hari Singh.[285] The memorandum sent waves of resentment to the All India States' People Conference because Sheikh Abdullah had been elected the Vice-President of this organization. He Sarda Vallabhbhai Patel, the Home Minister in the Interim Indian Government, who was looking after the affairs of the Native States, took a very serious objection at this step of Sheikh Abdullah for starting this movement. From May 10, 1946, till his arrest on May 21, 1946 at Garhi when he was leaving for Delhi in a private vehicle via Jhelum valley road, Sheikh Abdullah delivered numerous speeches for the ouster of the Maharaja from the State and made irresponsible and indecent remarks against the Dogra ruler and his family which resulted in communal clashes

between the two communities in the Amira Kadal locality. [289] With lightning speed, the State administration swooped on the leaders of the National Conference and prominent leaders of the party were taken into custody.custody.

All cadres of Congress got embarrassed over the launching of this movement as it raised a new issue of removing the ruler of a Native State at a very wrong time. Acharya J. B. Kripalani, the then Congress President, insisted unless this movement was withdrawn, there was no possibility of a compromise between the Kashmir Government and the Indian National Congress.[290] After being vehemently criticized and condemned by the Congress leaders, Sheikh Abdullah's 'Quit Kashmir' movement flopped.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed who escaped to British India after the fear of being arrested by the State authorities and Dwarka Nath Kachru, the Secretary of All India States Peoples Conference, they both informed Pt. Nehru in an exceedingly exaggerated manner about the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah by the State administration when he was coming to see him for consultation in connection with the latest developments in the State politics. Pt. Nehru without ascertaining the facts about the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah accused the State Government's hotheadedness in dealing with the situation. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel got furious at the irresponsible statement issued by Pt. Nehru against the State Government without knowing the real nature of happenings in Kashmir.[291] Pt. Nehru apologized for his statement for giving undue publicity to this movement and issued a new statement acknowledging the facts.

Pt. Nehru informed Maharaja Hari Singh about his arrival in Srinagar on June 19, 1946,via Jehlum valley road to be accomplished by Asaf Ali, Dewan Chaman Lal, Baldev Singh, a former Advocate General of Bihar and Mohammad Yunus to arrange Sheikh Abdullah's defence that had been fixed on June 21, 1946.[292] He suggested to the Maharaja that in the interests of all concerned, trials be given up and that Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues be released and a peaceful solution of the crisis confronting Kashmir be sought. Hari Singh informed Pt. Nehru that advocates that would appear before the court trying Sheikh Abdullah's case, would only be allowed after the permission of the Chief Justice of the State High Court

was secured and further told him that it would be inadvisable for him to reach Srinagar as his presence would complicate the issues.[293]

It was believed by the State authorities that Pt. Nehru's intervention in the internal affairs of the administration would lead to serious complications so they had banned his entry inside the State. The District Magistrate of Kashmir, Maharaj Kishan Dhar, had issued orders in this respect: "In the exercise of the powers conferred on me by Rule 24 of the Jammu & Kashmir by Rule 24 of the Jammu & Kashmir X of 1942, I Maharaj Kishan Dhar, District Magistrate, Kashmir, hereby direct that the said Pt. Nehru of Allahabad shall remove himself from Kashmir immediately and shall not return to Kashmir Province without any previous permission in writing"

When Pt. Nehru reached Kohala at about 7.30 in the evening on June 19, 1946, he was not allowed to proceed and was served with the order of the District Magistrate. There was no alternative left with him but to spend the night in the Dak Bunglow at Kohala. Everyone condemned the attitude of Pt. Nehru in defying the ban imposed by the State administration in supporting the cause of Sheikh Abdullah whose communal nature had been acknowledged everywhere.[294]

On June 21, 1946, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the president of the Indian National Congress, informed Pt. Nehru through a telegram:" The Working Committee and I advise you to return to Delhi. The Working Committee's final decision is awaiting your return. I have asked His Highness, the Maharaja Kashmir to adjourn Sheikh Abdullah's case." Maharaja Hari Singh telegraphically informed Maulana Azad: "There is nothing to prevent Pt. Nehru from returning whenever he wishes to return. There was never any intention of detaining him here. Your telegram to Nehru has been wirelessed to him. All facilities will be at his disposal to enable him to return the moment he decides to do so. In fact one of my cars is at his disposal." On June 22, 1946, finding no alternative left to him, Pt. Nehru left for Delhi by car but Mr. Asif Ali along with his team was allowed to proceed to Srinagar to argue Sheikh Abdulla's case.

Superintendent of Kashmir Police, Wazir Sarup Chand, filed a complaint against Sheikh Abdullah under Section 124-A (sedition) of the Ranbir Penal

Code on May 28, in the Court of Session Judge, Lala Barkat Rai, for making seditious speeches against the ruler and the royal family at the Shrine of Khanka-e-Mohalla.[295] The assistant Advocate General, Pt. Madhu Sudan, appeared for the government and the trial lasted approximately for three weeks. Twenty-eight witnesses were examined of whom only five were nonofficials,[296] Magistrate Ram Lal deposed that Sheikh Abdulla had blown the bugle of freedom against the integrity of the State.[297] Mr. Asaf Ali effectively and with great judiciousness advanced his arguments in his client's favour and challenged the very basis of the ruler's authority to rule.[298] On July 10, 1946, the Session Judge, Barkat Rai, convicted Sheikh Abdullah on three different counts, sentencing him to three years simple imprisonment with a fine of Rs.500/- on each count; in default of payment of fine, he was to undergo further simple imprisonment for 3 months on each count.[299]

After his arrival in Delhi, Pt. Nehru admitted that Sheikh Abdullah had committed a serious blunder by starting the 'Quit Kashmir Movement' against the ruler but which had tumbled down like a pack of cards. By the middle of July 1946, complete normalcy had been restored in Kashmir and the State Government had lifted the ban imposed on Pt. Nehru's entry inside the State. The Prime Minister of the State, Pt. Ram Chander Kak, was successful in his game of making Pt. Nehru to eat humble pie.

Sheikh Abdullah was released from the jail under the general amnesty on September 29, 1947, after giving an assurance of his loyalty addressed in a letter to the Maharaja after India had attained its freedom less than a month later to be appointed the Head Emergency Administrator of the State on October 28, 1947.[301]

Plan to Divide India

On February 20, 1947, British Prime Minister Lord Clement Attlee announced in the House of Commons that Britain had decided to transfer power to the Indians not later than June 1948.[302] The Congress Working Committee asked the British Government to recognize the Interim Government formed on September 2, 1946, as the dominion Government of India and emphasized the need to speed up the work of Constituent

Assembly so that the the Constitution for the Indian Union be drafted.[303] Jinnah reacted sharply and announced that the League would not yield in its demand for Pakistan. Liaquat Ali Khan spoke in the same sharp tone on February 26, 1947 that the League would not accept any transfer of power unless the Muslim demand for Pakistan was fulfilled by the British.[304]

Viceroy Lord Wavell did not agree with the British Government's decision to withdraw from India within a period of one year and suggested a phased withdrawal of the British from India. Lord Attlee rejected the proposal put forward by Lord Wavell and appointed Mountbatten as the next Governor General of India who assumed his office on March 24, 1947.[305] After the oath ceremony which was held in the Durbar Hall of the Viceroy's House, he declared that the solution of the Indian problem was to be settled in the near future. For this purpose, Mountbatten held separate talks with different political leaders including those with Pt. Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan.

In May 1947, the Congress President, Acharya Kriplani, visited Srinagar to assess the political situation and tried to persuade the Maharaja to adopt a policy of conciliation towards the National Conference as the communal frenzy had gripped many parts of India.[306] As a result of the discussion held with the Maharaja and his Prime Minister, Pt. Kak, Acharya Kriplani was convinced that the 'Quit Kashmir Movement' needed to be officially withdrawn by the Kashmir National Conference before any compromise could be reached between the State Government and the National Conference. He denounced the 'Quit Kashmir' movement and maintained that Maharaja Hari Singh was a son of the State itself as such it was foolish for Sheikh Abdullah or for anybody else to ask him to quit the State.[307] By comparing the 'Quit Kashmir Agitation' with the 'Quit India Movement' of 1942, the Congress President explained while in the former case, the Maharaja was not an alien and in the latter the British were foreigners as such they had been rightly asked to quit the Indian soil.[308] Acharya Kripalani observed that any attempt to dislodge the Maharaja by unconstitutional means was bound to have serious repercussions on the other Indian States. The Maharaja was also evasive ono the question of accession of the State to the Constituent Assembly and Kripalani wound up his Kashmir visit without having achieved anything tangible both in regard to reconciliation between the State Government and the National

Conference and the association of the State with the Constituent Assembly of India.[309]

After his return from England towards the end of May 1947, Lord Mountbatten announced his plan for the division of India on June 3, 1947. 'Mountbatten's plan of June 3, 1947 for the partition of the subcontinent allowed only 73 days to divide a subcontinent which was the size of Europe minus Russia and consisted of eleven provinces directly ruled by the British and 565 Princely States. The problems that had to be ironed out were numerous and complex. He accelerated the time table for division and transfer of power contributed to confusion'.[309A]

Lord Mountbatten 'had delivered to 10 Downing Street a plan that offered Britain an honourable exit from India and to the Indians a solution ,however, painful to their impasse.'[310]

The Punjab Boundary Commission was announced on June 30, 1947, to be headed by the British jurist, Sir Cyril Radcliffe, to decide the new boundaries of the two provinces of undivided India, Punjab in the northwest and Bengal in the northeast which were to be divided between India and Pakistan. The formation of the commission was accepted by the top leadership of both the political parties of India, the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress and the Commission's jurisdiction did not apply to Jammu & Kashmir State.

"Faced with Mountbatten's last minute decision to speed up the timetable for Britain's departure from India, Radcliffe moved swiftly to complete his complicated and delicate mission before the appointed August 15, deadline for the transfer of power and he submitted the awards to Mountbatten on August 12, after he left India on August 15, never to return. Mountbatten revealed the details of the awards to Pt. Nehru, Mohd. Ali Jinnah and other political leaders on August 16, 1947, the day following the transfer of power but which were received coolly and with bitter criticism."[310-A]

Mountbatten Visits Srinagar

The British had established the Gilgit Agency in 1889 under the control of the Kashmir Resident to counter the Czar's growing influence in Central

Asia. In 1935, Soviet Russia took over the control of Sinkiang and to counter balance this, the British took a sixty year lease of the Gilgit Wazarat from the Maharaja[312]. At the time of partition, the Gilgit Agency had become vitally important for them because of their military bases[313]. The British rulers in India knew that if Jammu & Kashmir State got acceded to the Indian Dominion, their military base in Gilgit would not be allowed to continue for long by an independent India [314]. Keeping this in view, Lord Mountbatten under the pretext of a long standing invitation from the Maharaja paid a visit to the State from June 18 to 23, 1947, to prevail upon the ruler to accede to Pakistan.

Allen Campbell-Johnson in "Mission with Mountbatten" has recorded Maharaja Hari Singh's indecisive approach to accession in this way:

'Mountbatten has also seen for himself the paralysis of Princely uncertainty during his visit to Kashmir from which he has only just returned today-June 23, 1947. Both Nehru and Gandhi have been very anxious that the Maharaja of Kashmir should make no declaration of independence. And Nehru himself descended from Kashmiri Brahmins has been pressing to visit the State himself to seek the release from prison of his friend, Sheikh Abdullah, now President of the State's Congress. Mountbatten had a long–standing invitation from the Maharaja and would like to see him first.

'When I got there, he found the Maharaja politically very elusive and the only conversations that took place were during their various car drives together. Mountbatten, on these occasions urged him and his Prime Minister, Pt. Kak, not to make any declaration of independence, but to find out in one way or another the will of the people of Kashmir as soon as possible and to announce their intention by August 14, to send representatives, accordingly, to one Constituent Assembly or the other'.

'He told them that the newly created States Department was prepared to give an assurance that if Kashmir went to Pakistan, this would not be regarded as an unfriendly act by the Government of India. He went on to stress the dangerous situation in which Kashmir would find itself if it lacked the support of one of the two Dominions by the date of transfer of power. His intention was to give this advice privately to the Maharaja alone,

and then to repeat it in the presence of his Prime Minister, with George Abell and the Kashmir Resident, Colonel Webb, in attendance, at a small meeting where minutes could be kept".

'The Maharaja suggested that the meeting should take place on the last day of the visit to which Mountbatten agreed, feeling that this would allow him the maximum chance to make up his mind, but, when the time came, the Maharaja sent a message that he was in bed with colic and would be unable to attend the meeting. It seems that this is his usual illness when he wishes to avoid difficult discussions.

Needless to say, Mountbatten is very disappointed at this turn of events". Lord Mountbatten's mounted pressure on Maharaja Hari Singh proved ineffective. To be more specific for remaining noncommittal, the ruler had the complete support of his Prime-Minister who was pro-Pakistani and anti-Indian'. [315]

Dr. Karan Singh records Mountbatten's meeting with his father, Maharaja Hari Singh, in 'Heir Apparent', page 48:

"To be fair to him, of course, the situation he faced was a complex one, and there was no easy option. If he acceded to Pakistan, a large chunk of his people, including his entire Dogra base, would have been outraged. If he accedes to India, he risked alienating a large section of his Muslim subjects. Independence could perhaps have been an attractive proportion but to carry that off would have required careful preparation and prolonged negotiations with the parties concerned, as well as tremendous political and diplomatic ability. Mountbatten, in fact, had come to persuade my father to make up his mind well before August 15, and had brought an assurance from the Indian leaders that they would not object to his decision in whatever way he thought fit, even if it was accession to Pakistan".

The Indian Independence Act

The Indian Independence Act 1947 was passed by the British parliament on July 17, 1947:

‘The suzerainty of His Majesty over the Indian States lapses and with it all treaties and arrangements in force at the date of the passing of this Act between His Majesty and the Rulers of Indian States’. The Paramountcy of the Crown had to lapse with effect from August 15, 1947, the day fixed for the Indian Independence.

In his address to the Princes on July 25, 1947, Lord Mountbatten said: ‘There had been universal acceptance among the States of the Cabinet Mission’s Memorandum of 12 May and when the political parties accepted the withdrawal of paramountcy would enable the States to regain complete sovereignty.

The Indian Independence Act releases the States from all their obligations to the crown. The States will have complete freedom-technically and legally they become independent. In the cabinet Mission Plan of May 16, 1946, the proposal was that the States should surrender to the Central Government three subjects Defence, External Affairs and Communications. These subjects were to be handled for you, for your convenience and advantage by a larger organization. This seems so obvious that I was at a loss to understand why some rulers were reluctant to accept the position. One explanation probably was that some of you were apprehensive that the Central Government would attempt to impose a financial liability on the States or encroach in other ways on that sovereignty. If I am right in this assumption, at any rate so far as some Princes are concerned, I think I can dispel their apprehensions and misgivings. The Draft Instrument of accession which I have caused to be circulated on the basis for discussion to representatives of the States provides that the States accede to the appropriate Dominion on the three subjects only without any financial liability. Further, that Instrument contains an explicit provision that in no other matter has the Central autonomy or the sovereignty of the States. This would in my view, be a tremendous achievement for the States’.

I have no doubt that this is in the best interest of the States and every wise ruler and wise government would desire to link up with the great Dominion of India on a basis which leaves you great internal autonomy and which at the same time gets rid of your worries and cares over External Affairs, Defence and Communications.

The whole country is passing through a critical period. I am not asking any State to make any intolerable sacrifice of either its internal autonomy or independence. My scheme leaves you with all the practical independence that you can possibly use and makes you free of all. These subjects which you cannot possibly manage on your own. You cannot run away from the Dominion Government which is your neighbour any more than you can run away from the subjects for whose welfare you are responsible.

The lapse of paramountcy factor disturbed the Congress and Jinnah remained mute in this regard but the Congress leaders strongly protested against the complete abnegation of treaties and agreements with the States on the ground that it would result in administrative chaos of the greatest kind and suggested that existing arrangements should continue until new arrangements to be formulated.[316] 'As the Prime Minister in the Interim Government of the undivided India, Pt. Nehru had made it amply clear to the Princely States that the Independent Sovereign would never tolerate the independent sovereign existence of the Princely States and they were never to be more than federal units in free India. In addition, he rejected the outworn doctrine of the divine rights of the Indian Princes to rule and declared that in free India, the sovereignty of the nation would rest only with the people and not in the princes. Sardar Patel, the Minister of the States Department in the Interim Government who sat on the liquidation of the Indian States, had ruled out the possibility of the independent existence of the Indian Princely States after Independence'.[316A]

Gandhi's Srinagar Visit

Pt. Nehru wanted to see the Maharaja Hari Singh personally but Gandhiji took the onerous responsibility upon himself to prepare the way for Pt. Nehru. Gandhiji's visit to Srinagar from August 1 to 3, 1947, to see the ruler and his long discussions have been recorded by Dr. Karan Singh in his 'Heir Apparent', page 5; Here was a man who had become a living legend, who by sheer moral courage had shaken to its foundations the greatest empire the world had ever seen. He started a long monologue in a low, lisping voice which I could not clearly follow. My father listened respectfully but as far as I can recall said hardly anything himself. All I was able to gather from Gandhiji's words was that he was urging my father to

ascertain the wishes of his people, to take his people into confidence and to align himself with rather than against them in the political turmoil that was engulfing the country'.

Before Gandhi Ji left Srinagar for Delhi on August 3, 1947, he was successful in arriving at a definite commitment from the Maharaja though no document supports that conviction.[316B]

The first head to roll was that of Pt. Ram Chander Kak which was officially announced on of August 10. It was Pt. Kak who had planted in the Maharaja's mind the ambition to be the ruler of a sovereign Kashmir and it was the same person who had manipulated him to put off Lord Mountbatten's last meeting with the Maharaja. Major-General, Janak Singh Katoch, one of the close confidantes of the Maharaja and an old retainer of the family, was appointed as the new acting Prime Minister of the State but the Maharaja still stuck with the idea of remaining independent on the pattern of Hyderabad which had a majority of Hindus and a Muslim ruler in the person of Nizam.[317]

'He procrastinated the accession to see as to how the Indian Dominion would tackle the course of action. Lord Mountbatten was not in a hurry in getting the State of Hyderabad to be acceded to the Indian Union. He wanted it to remain independent and let it opt for Pakistan to bring about a breakup of the Indian Union into north and south India. Hyderabad could not be forced to accede to the Indian Union so long as Lord Mountbatten continued to be the Governor-General of India. It was after his departure from India that the Indian Government launched the Police action to make it a part of the Indian Union. Lord Mountbatten never cared to ascertain the views of Hyderabad people regarding the State's accession to the Indian Union as he insisted in the case of Jammu & Kashmir State. It was this attitude of Lord Mountbatten which compelled Maharaja Hari Singh to harden his attitude to remain independent.

'Lord Mountbatten knew that the British control over the Gilgit Agency would be opposed by the Indian Government and for its existence, the State should accede to Pakistan which was their brain child. This was the reason why Lord Mountbatten and his three British Chiefs of Armed forces

opposed to the last minute the proposal to send the Indian forces to save Kashmir when it had been carnaged by the tribals. Lord Mountbatten rejected the proposal of final accession of the State to the Indian Union especially when the Maharaja himself had favoured it'. It was made conditional by him for the simple reason that later on by holding a plebiscite and by undoing it, the control over Gilgit would not pass on to the Indian Union'.[317A]

The dismissal of Pt. Kak was hailed by the supporters of the National Conference but his removal was lamented by the Muslim Conference after his exit from the political scene. Gandhiji's considerable pressure on the ruler to abandon his attempts to delink from his rigid path had turned the tide against the expectations of the Muslim Conference. This move by the Maharaja was the first ray of hope and optimism among the central leadership that the day was not far when he would accede to the Indian Union.[317B]

British Influence

"The Foreign and Political Departments of the British Indian Government which functioned under the direct control of the Viceroy, were active in encouraging the Indian Princes to opt for independence and even advised the Muslim Princes to accede their territories to the Dominion of Pakistan. British Political Resident in different native States held discussions for this purpose under the directions of the former Foreign Secretary, Sir Olaf Caroe, and his British successors till 1948 when K.P.S. Menon took over the charge as Foreign Secretary of India. The proof that the British officials instigated these fissiparous trends was manifest in the initial policy orientations of the Maharajas of Kashmir and Travancore, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Nawab of Junagadh and even the Nawab of Bhopal." [317C]

The Princely States were given the option of joining either of the two Dominions but if they failed to exercise their option before 15th August, they would automatically be the independent rulers of their States.[318] It was made amply clear to rulers in the Chancellor of Chambers of Prince's Conference on August 1, 1947, that the Indian Government had decided to

execute the Stand Still Agreement with only those who had already signed the Instrument of Accession.[319]

Partition

The partition of India in 1947 into two Dominions was a momentous tragedy of the 20th century for millions of people who were exposed to the worst type of brutalities and indignities. It was inevitable in the circumstances created by the inflated egos of the warring politicians which made it easy for the foxy British to divide the country into two parts. Gandhiji bemoaned it. Pt. Nehru, Sardar Patel and Maulana Azad reluctantly gulped this pungent pill which resulted in the communal riots of a colossal magnitude. Partition claimed the migration of ten millions of people from either side and the ruthless massacre of one million people without any fault. The Indian leadership had expected that Pakistan would see the wisdom of joining India in a loose federation or confederation which could have worked to the benefit of both and become a power to be reckoned with in Asia and the world.[320]

'Fatefully Maharaja Hari Singh let Independence Day come and go without announcing his decision and when he finally decided 72 days later to accede to the Indian Dominion, it seemed to Pakistan the brutal betrayal of the contiguous communal majority principle underlying the entire project of partition but also confirmed their substantial doubts'.[321]

Stand Still Agreement with Pakistan and India

The Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir State, Janak Singh Katoch sent two identical telegrams to the Dominions of India and Pakistan on August 12, 1947:

The text is as follows:

'The Jammu and Kashmir Government would welcome the Stand Still Agreement with India, Pakistan, on all matters on which there exist at the present moment with the British India Government. It is suggested that existing agreements should continue pending settlement of details and formal execution of a fresh agreement'.

Reply from Pakistan

"Your telegram of the 12th. The Government of Pakistan agrees to have a Stand Still Agreement with the Government of Jammu & Kashmir for the continuance of the existing arrangements pending settlement of details and formal execution of fresh agreements'.

Reply from the Government of India

'The Government of India would be glad if you or some other Minister duly authorized in this behalf could fly to Delhi for negotiating the Stand Still Agreement between the Kashmir Government and Indian Dominion. Early action desirable to maintain intact existing arrangements and administrative arrangements'. The Prime Minister of the State sent a representative to New Delhi with the relevant documents to execute the formalities of the Stand Still agreement but Pt. Nehru refused to see the emissary of the State Government so long as his friend, Sheikh Abdullah, was behind the bars.

It was Maharaja Hari Singh who had decided to accede to India first but Pt. Nehru remained the main stumbling block to accession with his insistence that the Maharaja must have the positive response of his people's aspirations through Sheikh Abdullah.[322] Had Pt. Nehru been more reasonable and accommodating in his approach as Sardar Patel clearly wanted to be, Kashmir would have acceded to India well before the tribal invasion.[323]

'Pakistan after signing the Stand Still Agreement began exerting pressure on the State by interfering with essential supplies and disturbed the existing postal and telegraph system. At that time all major communication systems into the State lay through Pakistan, the road from Kohala and the two rail heads at Rawalpindi and Sialkot. Thus Pakistan launched a virtual economic blockade to force my father to accede to it'.[324]

Muslim Conference's Revolts

A meeting of the Muslim Conference leaders was held in Srinagar under the aegis of Ch. Hamid Ullah in Srinagar only two days after the Indian Dominion had been created in which Ibrahim Khan, an advocate and a

militant leader from Poonch who was sent to England at the expense of the State to be trained as a barrister, Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, Moulvi Noor-ud-Din and several League members from Punjab and the North Western Frontier Province expressed apprehensions that 'Independence of Kashmir would only perpetuate the Dogra rule and until the State did not accede to Pakistan, the Kashmiri Muslims would not be free from the shackles of Dogra rule'.[325] They expressed fears that Congress leaders were pouring into Kashmir to build heavy pressure on the ruler to accede to India and there was little certainty that the Maharaja would be able to withstand the pressure from his co-religionists inside the State and Hindus from outside the State.[326]

The Muslim Conference leaders demanded urgent action against any alliance between the State Government and the National Conference and stressed the urgency to forge a joint front to organize resistance against any attempt to push Kashmir into the Indian Dominion. A Pakistan council was formed for 'Direct Action' against the State Government. Ibrahim Khan excited the assembled people for an open revolt against the Dogra dynasty and be prepared for an armed rebellion against the Dogra regime.[328]

Pak Intrusion

In early September 1947, the first information about Pakistan's hostile activities were received through the Naval and Air Force interceptry channels that confused the Army Headquarters which did not indicate the directions where the harried places were located.[329] It was only after the word 'Poonch' was uttered that the disjointed intercepts were pieced together and now it was confirmed that the places under pressure were the parts of the Kashmir State but as the State had not by then acceded to the Indian Union, the information was treated as of little importance and thus dumped.[330]

The British had decided to create an independent Muslim State of Pakistan to which they wanted to make Kashmir a part of it. Throughout 1946, the British Indian Army officers frequently visited Mirpur Poonch districts ostensibly for recruitment purposes but actually they instigated the Muslims of these areas against the State to pave the way for its union with Pakistan

when it would come into being.[330A] The Muslim ex-servicemen of Mirpur Poonch had close social, economic and religious affinities with the people of the adjoining districts of Jehlam, Rawalpindi and Hazara in Pakistan. They had been converted to Islam during the Mughal times but now most of them wanted to be reconverted to Hinduism.[331] This move was vehemently opposed by the Kashmiri Pandits and the Rajputs and did not allow them to succeed in their mission 'During the 1930s they came under the influence of the Muslim Conference. The politics of the adjoining districts of Jehlam and Rawalpindi also began to influence them'.

The result was that most of them became supporters of Pakistan after its establishment. It was, therefore, easy for the Pakistani agents to instigate them to rebel against the authority of the State.[332] Early in August as the partition of India was drawing near there were many meetings and demonstrations in Poonch in favour of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. After one such incident on August 27, in Nila Bat, Abdul Qayyum started a revolt against the Dogra rule and rapidly the Muslim ex-servicemen joined Qayyum and in six weeks the whole district except Poonch city itself was in rebel hands.[333] The Muslim Conference was in close contact with the agents of Pakistan and large quantities of arms had been smuggled into the districts of Mirpur and Poonch, Contiguous to West Punjab in Pakistan and distributed among the Muslim activists.[334]

One Swami Sant Dev had created in the mind of Maharaja Hari Singh the illusion that he was destined to be Sovereign Ruler of Kashmir. 'That Swami astutely played, planting in my father's mind visions of an extended kingdom sweeping down to Lahore itself, where our ancestor Maharaja Gulab Singh and his brothers Raja Dhyan Singh and Raja Suchet Singh had played such a crucial role a century earlier. There is also some reason to believe that Swamiji was in touch with some of the Congress leaders and that Acharya Kripalaini's visit to the State in mid May, 1947 was a direct result of his intervention. It was in the political sphere that Swamiji's influence proved to be disastrous'.[335]

Jinnah's Pressure on the Maharaja to the Join Pakistan

Mr. Jinnah made frantic efforts to mount pressure on Maharaja Hari Singh to opt for Pakistan by promising the same status and privileges in Pakistan as he enjoyed under the suzerainty of the British Crown [336]. For alluring the Maharaja to make his choice for Pakistan, Jinnah utilized the good offices of Major-General, H.L. Scott, an Englishman, who was at that time serving as the State's Chief of the Military staff.[337] 'Geographically the State was contiguous to both the Dominions. Historically it had more links with India than Pakistan and economically it depended entirely on the latter. Mr. Jinnah claimed Kashmir for Pakistan on the ground of its being a Muslim majority unit contiguous to Pakistan. He was so confident about it that he told a deputation of the Jammu & Kashmir Muslim Conference which waited on him in Lahore, 'Kashmir is in my pocket'.

It was an established belief in the India Office in London shared by the British Staff of Lord Mountbatten in Delhi that Kashmir would go to Pakistan not only because it had a majority of Muslims but also because in some fundamental way Pakistan would not be complete without Kashmir.[337B]

Redcliffe Award

The Indian Independence Act had empowered the Maharaja to join either of the Dominions but how could he decide in favour of the Indian Dominion with which his State had no road, rail and telecommunications links at the time of partition? The Gurdaspur District was included in Pakistan and the Redcliffe Award, which gave an easy corridor to the State with India, was still awaited. The treatment meted out to minorities in Pakistan made the Maharaja reluctant to join Pakistan [338]. Maharaja Hari Singh was between the devil and the deep sea if he acceded to India meant immediate transfer of power to Sheikh Abdullah without any definite guarantee about the future of the State as he had made no secret of his hostility to the person and his government. His sentiments and patriotism stood in the way of accession to Pakistan.[339] The primary reason for his long delay was his aversion to both Pt. Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah as the Maharaja never wished to join Pt. Nehru's India.

Family pressure wielded on the Maharaja was one factor which was compelling him to accede to India.

Maharani Tara Devi

As Her Highness used to shoulder the administrative responsibilities of the State, she travelled to Lahore along with the heir apparent, Yuvraj Karan Singh, to sound Justice Mehr Chand Mahajan of the East Punjab High Court about the possibility of heading the State Council of Ministers in place of Ram Chander Kak who as Colonel Webb, the Kashmir Resident, had intimated to the Viceroy, preferred independence for Kashmir and close ties with Pakistan.[340]
meeting with the Maharani, Justice Mahajan remained allusive but accepted the offer when it was renewed at the end of August.[342]

Post & Telegraph Services

On August 23, 1947, the Maharaja's Government requested the Indian Government to take charge of the post and telegraph services in the State which showed the Maharaja's real bent of mind.[343] The demand was conceded by the Indian Government on an emergency basis.

Maharaja Hari Singh had decided in favour of joining the Indian Dominion ever since the visit of Mahatmaji and the only hitch which kept him waiting was to obtain Sheikh Abdullah's consent on the State's accession to India which the Maharaja 'would not trust Sheikh Abdullah to the extent the Indian leaders were inclined to'.[344] Apart from the Maharaja's inclinations towards India, Pakistan's attitude in fulfilling its commitments under the stand still Agreement and the virtual economic strangulation of the State was also responsible for the Maharaja's drift towards the Indian Dominion.[345] All this became clear when the Maharaja was convinced that he could not remain independent, then he decided to accede to India rather than Pakistan.[346]

Sardar Patel's letter broke the ice between the Congress and Maharaja Hari Singh which was followed by detailed discussions between the Maharaja and Dewan Gopal Das in which the former promised to declare general

amnesty to political prisoners and to remove his Prime Minister who wanted to align with Pakistan.[347]

The Maharani, Tara Devi, in a meeting with Justice Mahajan at Flatti Hotel in Lahore on May 1, 1947, offered him the Prime Ministership of the State and asked for an interview with the Maharaja.[341] At the On August 25, 1947, ten days after the dissolution of the Boundary Commission, Her Highness, Tara Devi, invited Mehr Chand Mahajan to visit Srinagar which he accepted.[348]
On September 13, State Government in a letter to Sardar Baldev Singh sought the services of Colonel Kashmir Singh Katoch from the Indian Army on secondment to head the State forces.[349] Colonel Katoch, son of Major-General, Thakur Janak Singh, took over the new appointment after the services of Major-General, H.L. Scott, Chief of State's Military Chief, were terminated on September 24, 1947.[350]

Maharaja Hari Singh's choice ultimately fell on Justice Mahajan to head the administration of the State much to the satisfaction of Sardar Patel.

Between September 19 and 21, 1947, the Chief of State forces, H.L. Scott, had made a decision to leave the Kashmir Government service on the ground that the Maharaja had more or less made up his mind to accede to India'.[351] In the same manner, the State's Police Chief, Mr. Richard Powell, was also relinquishing his post at the same time citing the same reason.

Conspiracy to Annex State

'Only three weeks after the establishment of Pakistan, a major conspiracy was hatched to annex the State if its Hindu ruler was not prepared to join Pakistan. Liak Ali, the then Prime Minister of Hyderabad State, had brought Rs. 5 crores for Pakistan to overcome her financial crises. Liaqat Ali Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and Altaf Hussain, the Editor of *Dawn* of Karachi, persuaded Jinnah to attack Kashmir. Jinnah was at first reluctant to approve the plan. But he was finally won over by the crafty Liak Ali, supported by Liaqat Ali Khan, by a subtle appeal to his insatiable vanity. Jinnah yielded and gave his sanction to invade Kashmir. The pros and cons

of this invasion were also discussed which were psychological factors to help them to achieve their cherished dream of annexing Kashmir:

1.
2.
3.

4. India would not risk her newly acquired international reputation by sending the army to fight the raiders.

Before any reaction in Delhi was discernible, Pakistan should occupy Kashmir.

Mahatma Gandhi would oppose the war with Pakistan and favour the accession of the State to Pakistan.

Lord Mountbatten and Sir Claude Auchinleck would help the Pakistan cause to meet the Pakistan aggression on Kashmir.

The decision was kept a top secret'.[351A] **Mehr Chand Mahajan**

Before leaving for Srinagar to take charge of the new assignment, Mehr Chand Mahajan accompanied by Sardar Baldev Singh, the Indian Defence Minister met Sardar Patel, the Home Minister, on 18th September who 'not only encouraged me but practically ordered me to accept the offer and asked me to proceed to Srinagar at once. I was also given permission to take up service in the State which he thought was in the interest of India in the circumstances that had arisen. I also met Pt. Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, who wanted an immediate change in the internal administration of the State and asked me to see that Sheikh Abdullah was set free. I had an hour's talk with Mahatma Gandhi, he had no desire to liquidate the Maharaja or to do any harm to him and that if possible, this state should have a democratic set up. I communicated to the Maharaja the wishes of Pt. Nehru and also conveyed to him the gist of the talks with the Indian leaders.[352]

Release of Sheikh Abdullah

In mid September ‘negotiations were then going on between Sheikh Abdullah and the Maharaja through Mr. Ram Lal Batra, the Deputy Prime Minister and General Janak Singh who was officiating Prime Minister of the State. Sheikh Abdullah was in poor health in jail and in the altered situation of the country, the Maharaja was considering whether he should be released. The Maharaja’s advisors wanted a letter of apology pledging loyality to the Maharaja from Sheikh Abdullah. He was half-willing to give such a qualified and guarded understanding as it would affect his leadership later on’.[353]

Maharaja Hari Singh under general amnesty made way for the release of Sheikh Abdullah and his comrades from the jail on September 26, ‘in keeping with the wishes of the Indian Government’.[354] Sheikh Abdullah in his letter had assured the Maharaja that his personal anti-Dogra campaign was now a thing of the past and his party would not revive the political activities for the Maharaja’s abdication from the State.[355] The Maharaja sent his trusted aide, Thakur Harnam Singh Pathania down to Delhi carrying Sheikh Abdullah’s letters on September 29, 1947, and the same day Sheikh Abdulla along with his comrades were released from the jail which was welcomed by all the people of the State including the Muslim Conference.

In the evening Sheikh Abdullah addressed a gathering of one lakh Kashmiris at Hazuri Bagh where he declared that joining either dominion was a secondary matter and made it abundantly clear that forty lakh Kashmiris would decide the issue of accession themselves.[356] He roared that he had no belief in the two-nation theory even though Pakistan had become a reality based on this trash theory.[357] He even challenged Jinnah and Muslim League supporters ‘where were they when the people of Kashmir were struggling for their freedom and they always opposed the voice of Kashmiris as religion had no place in politics’.[358] There can be no doubt that Sheikh Abdullah’s statement was decidedly pro-Indian at least antiPakistani.[358A]

The release of Sheikh Abdullah and appointment of Mehr Chand Mahajan to the Premiership of the State was a rude shock to the Pakistanis because they were aware of Mahajan’s leanings towards the Indian leaders. Sheikh

Abdullah's release from the jail did not pave the way for the State's accession to India as expected by the Indian leaders but he was able to extract from India the terms of accession that hardly met his requirements.[359] Pressure was mounted on the Maharaja by Pt. Nehru to transfer the power to Sheikh Abdullah even before the formalities of the accession were to be executed.[360]

A prominent member of the Muslim League who owned the *Pakistan Times*, published a report on its front page originating from Srinagar dated: September 26, 1947, stating that Kashmir had decided to join the Indian Union and the decision for the purpose was taken two weeks earlier as reported by its correspondent.[361] The source of the information was likely to be Jinnah's Secretary, K. H. Khurshid, a native of Gilgit with a large network of contacts, who had been in Srinagar monitoring political developments since the beginning of July 1947.[362] The report, which appeared highly speculative at that time proved to accurate.[363] By October 7, U.K. High Commissioner in Pakistan reported that the Maharaja's impending accession to India was bazaar gossip in Pakistan and obviously the Pakistan Government was aware of it.[364]

Regular Armed Raids from Across the Border:

The Pakistan Government wielded tremendous pressure on the State taking full advantage of the Radcliffe Award which had left no road connectivity of the State with the Indian Dominion. Vehicles that fetched passengers, goods and mails inside the State through Rawalpindi were confiscated by the Pakistan authorities that created an acute scarcity problem. It was a direct violation of the Stand Still Agreement against which the State Government protested and approached the Pak Government to clear the messy situation. Besides the economic and commercial blockade to starve the State for an internal revolt, Pakistan started regular armed attacks all along the border from Kathua to Poonch to coerce the Maharaja to accede to Pakistan.

'Within Kashmir the Maharaja's position was equally unenviable. He was at loggerheads with the National Conference, whose secular and pluralistic outlook he shared because it demanded his virtual abdication. But he was

being supported by the Muslims but whose members supported their undying loyalty if he chose to remain independent and full support for his continuing internal autonomy, if he chose Pakistan'.[365]

Raja Yakub Khan of Hazara alleged attacks on Muslims in Poonch and informed the State Government through a telegram dated August 29, 1947: 'We are ready to enter the State fully equipped to fight your forces. You are requested to ease the situation, otherwise be prepared to suffer the consequences'. Mehtar of Chitral, Nawab of Dir and Mirs of Hunza had formally warned the Maharaja that if he acceded to the Indian Union they would invade the State.[366]
On August 31, 1947, Chief of the State forces, Major-General, H.L.Scott, informed the State Government about the unsatisfactory situation prevailing at Hazara and Rawalpindi and recent disturbances in Bagh Tehsil were led by armed gangs from across the border.

On September 3, 1947, a gang of 300 raiders attacked a village, Rajpura about 10 miles South of Samba and they abducted the young girls and women of the murdered Hindus and Sikhs;

Another group of about 500 raiders armed with military rifles attacked Chak Hariya about 6 miles from Samba and also attacked the State force patrol centre.

On September 4,500 armed hostile tribesmen in green and khaki uniforms from Kahuta and Murree in Pakistan, raided the State territory after having crossed the Jhelum river at Owen Ferry and at Panjar. A protest was lodged with the Pakistan Army to prevent their depredations.

On September 5, armed raiders had free access to southern parts of Poonch and a gang of Pakistani raiders attacked Alibeg about 12 miles west of Bhimber.

On September 7, armed gangs of Pakistani raiders targeted the southern villages of Manavar and Zehri.

On September 8, Hindus and Sikhs from Rawalpindi reaching Srinagar under the protection of Pakistani soldiers were completely annihilated.

On September 12, the post offices in Mirpur refused to accept insured articles, registered letters and mony-orders and the very same day arms were distributed among the Muslims in Alibeg and Jatli and the result was ruthless killings.

On September 17, a contingent of the State force came into direct clash with a gang of about 400 Pakistani raiders in south east of Ranbir Singh Pura but when challenged by the State force, they fled to Pakistan.

To overcome the acute scarcity of diesel and petrol, the State Government approached the Burma Oil Company and was successful in its mission. But when on September 19, the Sub-area Headquarters at Sialkot pleaded that five wagons carrying petrol and diesel be sent to Jammu under the supervision of the Pakistani force, no response was received from the other end.

On September 19, the special Magistrate of Palandri telegraphed the State Government that Pakistani raiders were taking positions near the borders.

On September 22, Mawa village about 6 miles south east of Samba was attacked and the Pakistani raiders tried to take away the cattle from Chak Saida about 10 miles south east of Samba but their attempt was repulsed by the villagers.

About 400 Pakistani raiders set fire to Johar village at about 11 at night in the same vicinity.

Regular raids by Pakistan over Manshera, Poonch, Mirpur, Kotli, Bhimber and up to Kathua in Jammu province were to coerce the Maharaja to accede to Pakistan. The Maharaja’s Government made frantic appeals to the Governor-General of Pakistan, which proved ineffective and bore no result.

On October 3, 1947, about 100 armed raiders attacked the Thikot Police station about 8 miles south east of Kohala and after looting the arms, set fire to it.

On October 4, a plane was seen flying from Kohala to Palandri for reconnaissance purposes and a gang of 400 armed raiders attacked Chirala

on the Kohala-Murree road.
On October 6, State forces drove away the armed raiders at Salyan and in Khatwa and on the same day, armed raiders besieged Thorath and a large contingent of military trucks loaded with armed raiders reached Abbotabad.

Authorities in the Home and Defence Ministries wanted to help the Maharaja's crisis ridden State with arms to withstand the regular raids from across the border.

On October 7, 1947, Sardar Patel in a communication to Sardar Baldev Singh that supplies of arms to the State be expedited and urged that the question of military assistance be brought up before the Defence Council.[367]

To Evacuate Britons from the Valley

Major Cranston, a former member of the Political service but now serving in the British High Commission, visited Srinagar from 10 to 14 October to make preliminary arrangements to evacuate Britons living in Kashmir in case of any invasion and reported that the Mehtar of Chitral and Nawab of Dir had formally warned the Maharaja that if he acceded to the Indian Union, they would invade the State.[368] Mahajan says that when he took over the charge of the State administration, he came to know that sizeable tribesmen had been ready for an invasion of Kashmir to capture Srinagar before the festival of Eid which fell on October 26, 1947.[369] When he informed the Maharaja about the situation, he found that Maharaja Hari Singh was aware of it.[370]

Jinnah's Request to Relax in Srinagar

Mr. Jinnah, after becoming the GoverGeneral of Pakistan, renewed his offer through his Military Secretary, a Britisher, to let him relax in Srinagar ostensibly for health reasons as advised by his physicians as a private citizen. 'The Maharaja suspected his intentions that the object of his visit to Srinagar was to coerce him to secure Kashmir's accession to Pakistan and to celebrate Eid there as the GovernorGeneral of Pakistan including Kashmir. The Maharaja sent a polite refusal to his request emphasizing the fact, that he being the Governor-General of Pakistan could only visit the

State if due arrangements could be made for his stay as the head of the neighbouring State. This, the Maharaja said, he was not able to do in the circumstances that had arisen. If the Maharaja had not turned down the request, Jinnah would have somehow created a situation in Kashmir leading to its accession to Pakistan and its final annaxation'.[371]

Sardar Patel

'Sardar Patel, the iron man of India, who achieved the distinction of integrating the Princely States with the Indian Union, wanted an early accession of Jammu & Kashmir State. He asked Mehr Chand Mahajan, to send a special messenger to Guru Golwalker, the then R.S.S. Chief, with a request to prevail on Maharaja Hari Singh to join India. Air travel was arranged for Guruji from Delhi to Srinagar by the Home Ministry of India. In the opinion of Sardar Patel, Guruji was very close to the Maharaja and commanded respect in the ruling family. Guru Golwalker reached Srinagar on October 17. In a meeting with the Maharaja on October 18, which took place between the two where 16-year-old Prince Karan Singh was also present and the fourth person who attended the meeting was Mehr Chand Mahajan. Guruji apprised the Maharaja the purpose of his visit. After some discussions, the Maharaja said, "my State is totally dependant on Pakistan because all the communications are through the cities of Sialkot and Rawalpindi which are both in Pakistan'. Guruji then told the Maharaja, 'you are a Hindu Raja, to accede to Pakistan means, your Hindu subjects will have to struggle for their existence. It is correct that at present there is no rail, road and air links with India but within a short time these will be available to your State. It is in your interest as well as the interest of your State that you should join the Indian Union. Meanwhile Mahajan also intervened in the talk and pleaded with the Maharaja to accede to India. Guruji's meeting with the ruler changed his rigid thinking to remain independent'.[372]

It was an established fact that the Maharaja Hari Singh never wanted to join Pt. Nehru's India because of his personal hostile feelings towards the Maharaja and he viewed Congress as an enemy because Pt. Nehru championed the cause of Sheikh Abdullah to gain power in the State while Sardar Patel wanted Kashmir to join the Indian Union through

persuasion.[373] Maharaja Hari Singh had a strong feeling that Pt. Nehru wanted to slight him by forcing him to submit to Sheikh Abdullah about whose bona fides the Maharaja had valid doubts.[374] Sheikh Abdullah banked on Pt. Nehru to secure power for himself so he did not consider it necessary to win the confidence of the ruler. Pt. Nehru should have shed his obduracy towards the Maharaja and should have biased attitude to tackle the problem more realistically. Had the Maharaja been offered half as good terms as the Nizam was offered later on and the release of Sheikh Abdullah and transfer of full power to him had not been insisted then as a prerequisite of accession, the shape of things in the State might have been quite different. The Maharaja would have been comfortably persuaded by Sardar Patel as he did in the case of other Princes, to hand over power to popular leaders like Sheikh Andullah. The unrealistic policies of Pt. Nehru helped to create more complications and dimensions to the Kashmir problem.[375]

Mahajan Appeals to British Prime Minister

Immediately after assuming the charge of the State administration, Mr. Mahajan sent a telegram to the British Prime Minister about the deteriorating conditions in the State by informing that the Pakistani Government had violated the Stand Still Agreement by withholding the essential supplies inside the State and expressed fear that the entire State border from Kathua to Gilgit might be invaded. Mahajan made an appeal to the British Prime Minister to prevail on the Pakistan Government to treat the State humanely. The British Prime Minister did not acknowledge receipt of the telegram obviously because Jinnah was implementing the British policy which was to secure Gilgit to retain its military basis and that was only possible if the State acceded to Pakistan, their own creation.

When the State Government received no reply from the British Prime Minister, Mr. Mahajan sent a detailed protest note to the Governor-General and Prime Minister of Pakistan on October 18, 1947, which runs as follows:

‘Ever since August 15, 1947, in spite of the agreement to observe the Stand-Still Agreement on matters which agreement existed on August 14, with British India, increasing difficulties have been felt only with regard to supplies from West Punjab of petrol, oil, food, salt and cloth, working of

postal system has been most detrimental to people as well as to the administration. Savings Bank Accounts refused to be operated. Postal Certificates not cashed. Cheques by branches here of West Punjab banks not honoured, even Imperial Bank branch hard put to meet obligations owing to failure of remittances from the Lahore Currency office. Motor vehicles registered in the State, have been held up at Rawalpindi. Railway traffic from Sialkot to Jammu has been discontinued. While the State has afforded safe passage to about one lakh Muslim refugees from Pathankot to Sialkot, the Rawalpindi have murdered or wounded in cold blood over 180 out of the party of 220 Kashmiri nationals being conveyed to Kohala at the State's request.

People armed with modern long range fire-arms have infiltrated in thousands in Poonch and committed horrors on nonMuslims murdering, maiming, looting them and burning their houses as well as kidnapping women. Instead of cooperation asked for through every possible local as well as provincial authorities and central authority paper promises made have not been actually followed by more vigorous action than before. The Press and radio of Pakistan appear actually to have been licensed to four volumes of fallacious and false propaganda'.

'Smaller feudatory States have been prompted and threatened with armed interference in the State. To crown all, the State is being blamed for acts which actually are being committed by Pakistani people. The government also trusts that it should be admitted that these acts are extremely unfriendly, if not actually bordering on inimical. Finally the government wishes to make it plain that it is not possible to tolerate this attitude any longer, without grave consequences to the life and property of the people, which it is sacredly bound to defend at all costs'.

'The government even now hopes that it would personally look into the matter and put a stop to all the brutalities which are being perpetrated. If unfortunately, this request is not heeded, the government fully hope that you would agree that it would be justified in asking for friendly assistance and oppose trespass on its fundamental rights'.

Jinnah, the Governor-General of Pakistan in his reply wire to Maharaja Hari Singh on October 20, 1947 refuted all allegations:

The allegations in the telegram under reply that the Standstill Agreement has not been observed is entirely wrong. The difficulties that have been felt by your administration have arisen as a result of the widespread disturbances in East Punjab and the destruction of communications caused thereby particularly by the shortage of coal. These difficulties have been felt actually by the West Punjab Government themselves. The difficulties with regard to banking facilities were caused by the lack of staff in the various banks and cannot be laid at the door of the West Punjab Government who have in fact tried their best to ensure protection to the banks. The failure of remittances from the Lahore Currency office has nothing to do with the Pakistan Government since the Lahore Currency office is under the Reserve Bank of India. Your Government does not realize that there is no censorship in West Punjab. The complaint about local and provincial authorities is thus wholly unfounded. Threat to enlist outside assistance shows clearly that the real aim of your government's policy is to seek an opportunity to join the Indian Dominion as a coup d'etat by securing the intervention and assistance of that Dominion. The policy is naturally creating deep resentment and grave apprehension among your subjects, 85 per cent of whom are Muslims. The proposals made by my government for a meeting with your accredited representative is now an urgent necessity to have an impartial enquiry made into the whole matter'.

Thakur Janak Singh Katoch on whom the mantle of premiership had been thrust by the Maharaja after Pt. Kak's removal was too old to initiate any strong action to counteract the aggressive designs of the enemy. No Indian statesman was forthcoming to risk his reputation by taking over the charge of the State at such a critical time.[376] Sheikh Abdullah and his comrades were cooling their heels in jail which had left the field free for the Muslim Conference which was becoming aggressive.[377] Mehr Chand Mahajan was persuaded by the Maharani, Tara Devi, to handle the administrative machinery of the State and to help it in weathering the storm that had engulfed the State.[378]

Before Mehr Chand Mahajan was appointed as the Prime Minister of the State on October 15, he had gathered a detailed report about the law and order and political situation prevailing in the State. The Muslim Conference

leaders and some influential divines were keen that the Maharaja should accede to Pakistan and they conveyed their feelings in a definite manner.[379]

Sensing the magnitude of regular raids on the Jammu borders from Kathua to Poonch, Mahajan conveyed his feeling to the Maharaja to see for himself the intensity of raids faced by the border villages to which they had been constantly subjected from across the border. Local Muslims residing on the borders including those serving in the State Police and Military services had sent their women folk to safer places in Pakistan.[380]

“The Muslims officials of the State police and armed forces were completely won over by the Pakistani agents. Some of the high ranking Muslim Military and Civil officials like Colonel Adalat Khan, MajorSher Ali, Captain Mohd. Hussain, Lt. Qayyum and many others began to work actively for insurrection from within. Others like Mian Abdul Rashid, the Senior Superintendent of Police of Jammu, Ch. Faiz Ullah, the District Officer of Baramulla and many other began to prepare the civil population. Arms and ammunitions were smuggled in large quantities from Pakistan into the State. Regular training in the use of fire arms began to be given in the mosques at Jammu and Srinagar’.[380A]

‘When I expressed my decision to go to Jammu, His Highness said he would also come along with me. We arrived in Jammu on October, 19 and granted interviews to deputations of Muslim and Hindus. There was great panic in the town. The Muslims had collected a large number of arms in a mosque in the centre of the town and were in a militant mood. The Superintendent of Police in Jammu was a Muslim who was in secret alliance with Pakistan and was causing mischief. The Chief of Staff of the State army was also a Muslim’.

‘The police which was more than 50 per cent Muslim had ceased to function. They had either deserted or left their duties. The Hindu and Sikh police was wholly insufficient to control the situation. Most of the members of State forces of which over 35 per cent were Muslims had either become deserters or assumed a partisan attitude. The Sikh and Hindu Dogra forces scattered over 84000 sq.miles of territory were too few to control both the situation in Jammu and stop Pakistani raids’.

‘We intended to go to Kathua from Jammu, a distance of about sixty miles. The next day we proposed to go to Bhimber, Mirpur, and Kotli side. On the morning of October 20, when we left the palace, the Maharaja ordered instead of going to Kathua we should first go towards Mirpur side. I said this would upset the whole programme of which information is given to the different district magistrates. The Maharaja said, ‘You are new to the State and it is much better in a situation like this not to follow the programme as the Pakistani raiders would come to know of it and we may find ourselves in difficulties’. So we took the road to Akhnoor and went to Bwawer, the village that had been raided during the night. I went to the village and saw dead bodies lying about. There were a few men of the State forces and we told them to dispose of the bodies. We proceeded further on the border and had our lunch in the dak bunglow at Bhimber which is situated just within two miles of the Pakistan border and within a few miles of the Gujarat town. One of leading Ministers of the Pakistan Government was in Gujarat at that time. It transpired that he had organized an armed raid on the dak bunglow for the next day, when according to our original programme, His Highness and I would have been in Bhimber. The raid did take place the next day as arranged and the dak bunglow was destroyed.

‘The next day we went to the Kathua side where similar happenings had taken place. What had happened in East Punjab and West Punjab was now happening in Jammu province along the whole border from Kathua to Kotli and Mirpur. During our four days’ stay in Jammu, we did our best to make people see reason. But the surprise raids from the Pakistani side were causing great panic and they could not be controlled except by military operations’.[381] There were no serious incursions across the border in the Muzaffarabad-Domel area which were happening in Mirpur and Poonch. ‘As early as October 15, Hindus and Sikh refugees from Abbotabad and Manshera had brought the news that a large force of Pakistani tribesmen, numbering over 6000 mainly Waziris and Afridis had concentrated in the Abbotabad-Manshera area with the avowed intention of invading the Kashmir valley. But Colonel Narain Singh when assured by his Muslim Company Commander at Lohar Gali that these were simply alarmist rumours and that there was no evidence of any concentration of tribesmen, preferred to believe his own officer and ignored the refugee warnings. Army Headquarters had received Intelligence inputs that Muslim officers

and men manning the forward defences on the Manshera road were congregating in mosques ostensibly for prayers but more likely for secret rendezvous with enemy agents. To verify these reports by the Army Headquarters brought a stinging reply from Colonel Narian Singh who stated that he had complete confidence in them. When it was suggested that Muslims elements in the battalion be withdrawn to Srinagar and replaced by Dogras but Colonel Narian Singh said that this would be a grievous insult to the unit and he would not tolerate it in any circumstances'.[381A]

Pak Invades Kashmir

The Indian Government was forced to think about the gravity of the situation by the reports of R.S. Shiv Saran Lal, the Deputy Commissioner posted at Dera Ismail Khan in the North Western Frontier Province about the preparations in the tribal area for an invasion of Kashmir so the Indian Government agreed to the request for a liberal supply of arms for the State troops.[382] The Pakistan Government now free from pressing problems created by the partition, became alert so it did not want to give Mr. Mahajan more time to stabilize the State's administration and to streamline its defences.[383] Captain Nasib Singh had informed the Chief of Staff, Brigadier Rajinder Singh, and LieutColonel, K.S. Katoch, the Military Advisor to the Maharaja about the situation on the Muzaffarabad front. The Chief of Army Staff of State forces had passed on all available information to the Maharaja and had discussed possible courses of action with the latter'.[383A]

Subedar Munawar Hussain of the 4th Jammu and Kashmir Infantry confided to his Hindu friend about the planning to invade the State:

a) Invasion of the State territories was to start from Muzaffarabad and Jammu simultaneously between October 20 and 22 so as to capture both the capital cities by Id-ul-Zaha which fell on the October 26.

b) An attempt was to be made on the life of the Maharaja at Srinagar on the 24th October when he was to attend the Dusshara Darbar.

c) The Muslim personnel of the State army stationed at the frontiers was to join the invader.

d) The local Muslims at Srinagar and Jammu were to prepare the ground for the victorious entry of the Mujahids.

e) To prevent any help from India reaching the State, the airport at Srinagar was to be captured first.

f) Maps and charts were ready and everything was to be executed according to the plan.

Muslim officials had informed their Hindu friends to pack off to India if they wanted to save their lives.[384]

The State forces who had to defend the long frontiers from Gilgit to Kathua and also to meet the internal threats were quite inadequate to meet the requirements. The war-time strength of the State army was nine infantry battalions, two mountain batteries and one cavalry squadron of the infantry battalions, three, viz, the 2nd, 4th and 6th J&K infantries were mixed – half Hindu Dogras and half Muslims from Mirpur and Poonch areas. At the time of invasion the mixed 4th battalion was in charge of the Muzaffarabad-Kohala sector, the 2nd of a part of the Mirpur Poonch sector and the 6th had been dispatched to Gilgit under the Command of Brigadier Ghansara Singh who was appointed the Military Governor to take over the charge of the Gilgit Agency after the withdrawal of the British. Srinagar Cantonment at the time of invasion had only one company of the 4th besides the Maharaja's personal guards'.[385]

The loyalty of the Muslim personnel of the State armed forces was doubtful because the inputs received by the State authorities revealed the nefarious designs of desertion by them in connivance with Pakistan authorities and their names had been forwarded to the Maharaja with a request to disarm them in the interest of the State.[386] The Military advisor to the Maharaja, Colonel Kashmir Singh Katoch along with Colonel Baldev Singh Pathania had gone to Poonch and Kotli to see the situation prevailing there and to infuse courage in the small military force. While Colonel Baldev Singh Pathania stayed at Kotli at a great personal risk and Colonel Katoch came back to Srinagar to apprise the Maharaja about the deteriorating situation there.

After the aerial survey of the affected areas, namely the towns of Mirpur, Bhimber and Rajauri which had been besieged by the local Muslims with the nexus of the Pakistan army, the Maharaja Bahadur accompanying his Prime Minister reached Srinagar on 22nd October only to face yet another grave situation of great magnitude. An unprovoked aggression had been committed by the tribals of the Frontier province to annex Kashmir which had been organized by an ex-officer of the Political Agency at Peshawar with the connivance of the Pakistan Government.[387]

"The Pakistani Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Frank Messervey was kept completely in the dark about the large scale operation that was mounted involving a considerable amount of equipment and the posting of officers to the Headquarters of 'General Jebel Tariq'. The Headquarters were, in fact, located in the same building as Messervey's own Headquarters in Rawalpindi. Whether he informed his counterpart in India of what was brewing is not known, but if he did, Sir Rob Lockhart did not pass on the information to Military Operations and the Intelligence Directorate. Another person who was certainly the eye-witness to this operation was Sir George Cunningham, the Governor of the North-West Frontier Province. Thousands of heavily armed tribesmen from across the Durand Line had appeared in Peshawar, must have shocked him. Cunningham personally knew Messervey and Auchinleck well and it is more than certain that he must have warned Auchinleck".[387A]

'Operation Gulmarg'

'Documents seized from the Pakistani soldiers revealed that the officer entrusted with organizing and implementing 'Operation Gulmarg' was a Major, Akbar Khan, a Regular officer of the Pakistani Army and a product of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. He assumed the pseudonym of 'General Jebe Tariq' after the great Muslim warrior of Morocco, who was said to have sunk his boats after landing on the soil of Spain. He established his Headquarters in Rawalpindi in the building occupied by Army Headquarters and was given free access to anything to ensure that the operation was a success. His failure to produce the expected results led to his fall from favour. The saving of the valley must be ascribed to two factors. Akbar Khan's error in choosing the frontier tribesmen as its cats-

paw and the daredevil gallantry of the Indian soldiers in repulsing them. Being a person of great ambition, he decided to rehabilitate himself with undue loss of time and which called for action of an abnormal type. He plotted to overthrow the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaqat Ali Khan but the plot was detected a few days before the target date and he was arrested to capture the political power in Pakistan through an abortive coup'.[387B]

The Commanders of the 4th Battalion especially Colonel Narian Singh, in charge of the Kohala-Muzaffarabad sector had been strictly warned by the Maharaja to remain vigilant and alert from his Muslim officers.[388] But Colonel Narian Singh who had commanded that battalion in the Burma campaign, expressed his complete faith in his Muslim officers. The soldiers thus had to pay a heavy price for his selfcomplacency.[389]

Seeing the gravity of the situation because of the invasion, Maharaja Hari Singh, summoned his Chief of the State forces, Brigadier Rajendra Singh to Gulab Bhawan Palace and informed him that informal negotiations had been started with the Indian Government for the deployment of Indian forces in the State to defend Kashmir from the Pakistan invasion. His Highness was in uniform and ordered the Chief of Staff to organize a reinforcement column which he would personally lead into battle to stop the enemy's advance.[390] With his formidable persuasive arguments, Brigadier Rajendra Singh dissuaded the Maharaja from his resolve and instead offered himself to go ahead to hold the enemy on the Muzaffarabad-Uri road until the arrival of Indian trrops'.[391] Before proceeding ahead for his tough task to defend Uri, he was asked by the Maharaja to collect all the combatant personnel he could find in the Badami Bagh Cantonment'.[392]

He was directed by the Maharaja to hold the enemy 'to the last drop of his blood'. He was indeed a committed soldier who did his best to save the valley and thus his name has been inscribed in golden letters in the annals of Indian Military History.

The main column of raiders after breaking the outer defences entered into Kashmir territory in the intervening night of 21st and 22nd October, guides from company in Lohar Gali led them to Muzaffarabad and Domel where the troops – not being on the alert because of the supposed security

provided by the deployment forward companies – were sleeping in their barracks.[393] The Muslim personnel of the State pickets joined the invaders and killed their comrades in their own tents and began to lead the convoy of the motor lorries supplied by the Pakistan Government carrying the invaders. They occupied the Kishan Ganga bridge without much difficulty and entered the town of Muzaffarabad without firing a shot. The Wazir-e-Wazarit of Muzaffarabad, Mr. Duni Chand Mehta, was taken by surprise in his own house and shot dead before his wife, Mrs. Krishna Mehta and children for not shouting 'Pakistan Zindabad'.

A few of them simultaneously crossed the Jehlum over a suspension bridge, connecting Domel, the confluence of Jehlum and Kishan Ganga, with the Nalouchi Gurudwara situated on the road to Muzaffarabad across the Kishenganga. Colonel Narian Singh was shot dead in his own tent by his soldiers in the early hours of the 23rd morning and the occupation of Domel brought both the roads leading to Srinagar from Rawalpindi and Abottabad under the control of the invaders. Their supply lines thus became secure'. On October 23, in the hour before dawn, Prithvinath Wanchoo, a young divisional engineer residing in the dak bunglow at Domel near the Kashmir-North West Frontier Province border was rudely awakened by his servant hysterically shouting *'Dushman aagaya'*. Wanchoo ran in panic and saw the village of Nalochi across the Kishen Ganga bridge in flames. Thus the curtain on the drama of invading Kashmir was raised.[393A]

Brigadier Rajinder Singh along with two platoons from 8 JAK, one from JAK, a few personnel from the JAK Training School (students & staff), a detachment of 3 in mortars (8 JAK) and a medium machine gun, left Srinagar at 6:30 pm in civilian buses and trucks, when the daylight was fading because of a drizzle and bad weather.[395] He halted at Baramulla where he contacted the civil authorities and by midnight reached Uri which was very tense and here he made some defensive dispositions in order to instil confidence among the local population.[396]

'Early next morning, while the main body started to organize the defence of Uri, a small force of about two platoons under the command of Captain Prithi Singh was sent forward to make contact with the enemy. Near Chakothi, the column met the wounded Subedar Munshi Ram and three

men of 4 JAK who had escaped from Domel. They confirmed the fall of Domel but were unable to give any specific information of how the enemy had succeeded in breaking through the defences at Lohar gali and Ramkot'. As the column reached Raghi, twelve miles short of Domel, they met a stream of refugees fleeing from Muzaffarabad and Domel, a mile short of Garhi. Soul stirring were their tales and sufferings and they narrated the actual happenings into the hands of the invaders, their brutalities on innocent people, betrayal of Muslim personnel of 4 JAK Infantry, their joining hands with the enemy and their uninterrupted advance towards Srinagar. They heard the sound of firing head, Prithi Singh ordered his column to move cautiously and tactfully. Hardly had they done so when the column saw a bus loaded with tribesmen coming from the direction of Garhi, it halted and the invaders were seen pouring out of the vehicle. Without giving them time, the leading troops engaged the enemy with fire. At the end of about two hours fire, one officer was killed and Prithi Singh himself got wounded while confronting the enemy'.[397]

As there was a danger of the enemy working round behind him, Prithi Singh withdrew to village Hatain to be followed by the enemy quickly. So Prithi Singh decided to break contact and returned Uri to rejoin the main column. A large number of invaders were seen climbing up the mountain side to the south and proceeding along the Pir Kanthi ridge to launch an attack down the slopes towards Uri and the enemy strength was estimated to be about 5000'.[398]

Rajinder Singh went back to Baramulla and flashed a message to Brigadier Faqir Singh, Commander of the Srinagar Brigade asking for more reinforcements. Brigadier Faqir Singh promised to send another 70 or 80 men, including a section of medium machine guns and a 3 inch mortar detachment.[399]

Meanwhile Maharaja Hari Singh had taken over the Command of Army Headquarters in Srinagar and ordered Captain Jwala Singh of 1 JAK to collect what troops he could find in Badami Bagh barracks and proceed immediately towards Uri. Realizing the gravity of the situation, Maharaja Hari Singh sent the historic order to Brigadier Rajendra Singh:[400]

Army Order

‘Brigadier Rajendra Singh is commanded to hold the enemy at Uri at all costs and to the last man.

Reinforcement is sent with Captain Jwala Singh. If Brigadier Rajendra Singh is not contacted, Captain Jwala Singh is commanded to hold the enemy at all costs and to the last man. He will do his best to contact Brigadier Rajendra Singh’.

‘Captain Jwala Singh with reinforcements arrived at 3:00 am on 24th October. The enemy seemed to be everywhere – on the ridge, along thae slopes, across the river and on the main road between Chakothi and Uri to be all round the JAK defensive positions. So dangerous was the situation that Brigadier Rajendra Singh decided to blow the stell-girder bridge just ahead of the forward defences and after setting of the charge there was a yawning gap on the far side of the bridge sufficient to prevent a vehicular column crossing over without repairs.’

“The defences were not thick enough to prevent infiltration during the night, so it was decided to break contact and withdraw to Mahura and to establish a fresh defensive position there. Although this entailed disobeying his ruler’s order yet Rajendra had no alternative because Uri could easily be cut off. So it was no longer prudent to hang on there. Moreover, the JAK force had fulfilled its one cardinal function at Uri as it had blown the steel-girder bridge at the eastern exit of the Romlet. Eventually the destruction of this bridge more than any other action saved Srinagar because the main column of tribesmen refused to go on without their vehicles to carry back their promised loot. The State Government gained two days to negotiate for the intervention of the Indian Army”.[401]

‘October 24 was the Dusshera Darbar Day on which every year, the Maharaja took the salute from the army and held a Darbar. A discussion took place in the palace on the 23rd night whether or not the Darbar be held in view of the tense situation. The Maharaja was of the opinion that the Darbar should not be held as enough State forces for the ceremonial parade were not available. I advised otherwise, being of the opinion that

cancellation of the Darbar would unnecessarily create panic in the town. The Darbar, if held, would give the local population the feeling that we had sufficient strength to meet the raiders and to save the city of Srinagar. The Maharaja took the salute in the traditional manner before a large assembly of officials, nonofficials and leading public men on the big parade ground outside the town on Baramulla road. In the evening the Darbar was held with the usual pomp and show and Nazars were offered to the Maharaja Hari Singh. No sooner had we left the Darbar Hall and reached the Amirakadal Bridge when the electricity failed and the city was plunged into darkness'.[402]

The withdrawing State troops reached Mahura at 10 pm and the staff at the Power House considering it was an enemy column approaching near it, put the plant out of action thus stopped the power supply to Srinagar. The JAK troops got busy to prepare the defences and to be joined by two detachments of 3 in mortars and the medium guns of 5 JAK arrived from Srinagar.

The main body of the raiders had halted at Uri but a column of tribesmen crossed over the foot-bridge at Mahura and attacked the JAK force which was repulsed but Captain Nasib Singh and Subedar Rasila Ram of 7 JAK, were both wounded.[403] By afternoon it became clear that the enemy finding frontal attack too costly, decided to work round to the rear of JAK troops established road blocks and cut-off its line of withdrawal.[404] At 2:30 pm Chief of Staff asked Jwala Singh to destroy the two bridges with the small demolition party which was completed by 4:30 pm but by then enemy pockets had infiltrated into the hills overlooking the stretch of road between Mahura and Rampur. The JAK 3 in mortars went into action picking up targets easily and it proved so effective that it gave no chance to the enemy to prepare for an assault.[405] Meanwhile patrol reports showed that the enemy was erecting road blocks in the rear by felling trees across the road.[406] For pulling back the entire convoy of nine trucks and buses road blocks erected by the enemy had to be cleared and that was possible only when it got dark. "The withdrawal was to start at 10:30 pm but by the time the perimeter positions were abandoned and the men arranged tactically in vehicle groups, it was past midnight. 1 am the leading vehicles moved off.

Enemy fire started as soon as the convoy passed through Rampur village, the road was well covered by small arms fire from the ridges'.

Troops from the two leading vehicles had been detailed to clear the trees under the cover of automatic fire. The first road block was cleared without any casualty but at the second near Diwan Mandir, the leading driver was hit which caused the confusion as the whole convoy from nose to tail halted making an easy target for the enemy. Captain Jwala Singh rushed to the front of the convoy only to find that the drivers of the first three vehicles had by then killed. Here he pushed the vehicles to one side and cleared the way for the remaining vehicles. By then he was hit but he climbed on the first vehicle to break through the road block and made for the Seri ridge just west of Baramulla'. While at Seri, Jwala Singh found that only four vehicles had been able to get past the road block and Brigadier Rajinder Singh was not among them. Most of the soldiers in the vehicles were either dead or wounded and he decided to pull back to Baramulla'.

'Brigadier Rajinder Singh was mortally wounded at the second road block. The driver of his vehicle having been killed, his men carried him for some distance but realizing that evacuation to Baramulla was out of the question- and would only endanger his men. He ordered them to hide him under a culvert and to make their own way to Baramulla as best as they could. This was the last that was heard of the gallant Brigadier. With a handful of men he had conducted an operation that effectively stemmed an overwhelmingly superior for long enough to enable Indian troops to be flown into Kashmir and thus saved Srinagar.'[407]

At 48, after becoming the Chief of Army Staff of Jammu & Kashmir Forces, he did not even get the last rites performed by his family and beloved ones'.

He became a legend by achieving a remarkable military feat of effectively meeting the onslaught of hostile invaders with a very small force. He fought a series of pitched battles with the advancing raiders for four crucial days from the morning of 23rd to 26th October and kept on fighting the enemy to the last man and to the last drop of his blood making the supreme sacrifice of his own life for the defence of his motherland. For his devotion to duty

and gallantry he was posthumously awarded the Maha Vir Chakra thus becoming the first Indian to receive the award from the first Indian Chief of Army Staff, General (later Field Marshal) K.M. Cariappa, which was presented to his widow Ram Dei on December 30, 1949 at Srinagar.

His death sent a wave of panic among the high echelons of the State Government and under these chaotic conditions the Maharaja made an urgent appeal to India for military help coupled with an offer for accession of the State with the Indian Union.

Muzaffarabad and Uri sacked, the State army which had to meet the raiders at numerous points soon found itself shattered and scattered into small fragments and gradually ceased to be a fighting force.

Poonch, Mirpur, Kotli, Jhanger, Nowshera and Bhimber were besieged. So this was the status of the State in this turbulence towards the last week of October 1947 caused by the Pakistani invasion.

Provisional Azad Kashmir Government claiming control over most of the State, had been set up headed by Sardar Mohd. Ibrahim Khan, the brother of Abdul Qaiyum Khan, the Frontier Premier-the chief architect of the Kashmir invasion. According to the Pakistan Radio broadcast, this so-called government, Azad Kashmir, was established in Pallandri somewhere in Poonch'.

Accession

On October 24, 1947, at the Defence Committee meeting which Lord Mountbatten attended, General Lockhart, Commander-in-Chief in India, read out a telegram from the Pakistan Army Headquarters stating that five thousand tribesmen had attacked, captured Muzaffarabad and Domel and that considerable tribal reinforcements could be expected and they were already little more than 35 miles from Srinagar'.[409]

As a result of the Maharaja's request for military help, the Commanders of the Indian armed forces were directed to examine and prepare plans for sending troops to Kashmir by air and road'. During the afternoon of the same day, V.P. Menon, Secretary in the States Ministry accompanied by

Colonel Sam Manekshaw in the Directorate of Military operations and who was also responsible for current operations all over India, West Frontier and Punjab, was sent to assess the military situation in Kashmir. At the same time, orders were issued to infantry battalions to prepare itself to be flown, at short notice, to Srinagar.[409A]

And what were Jinnah's marauders doing in Baramulla on October 26, 1947. On the fourth day of the invasion, the tribesmenwild, black beasts-swept into Baramulla, thirty-five miles away from Srinagar. Only 3000 people out of 14,000 survived the raid. Even the Saint Joseph's Franciscan convent, church and hospital were not spared'.[409B]

'To the invading warriors, the action was a fine mixture of Jehad and plundering expedition. They devastated, plundered, burnt and raped women. Catholic nuns and leading Muslims of Baramulla were butchered if they did not quickly present themselves as supporters of Pakistan'.[410]

Father Shanks gave a detailed account of the Christians who were the victims of these invaders.

"A 20-year-old Indian nurse, Philomena, tried to protect a Muslim woman who had given birth to a baby was shot dead and the woman was the next victim.

Mother Superior Aldetrude rushed into the ward, knelt over Philonena, saw a tribesman rob and attack her. The Assistant Mother, Teresalina, saw a tribesman point a rifle at Mother Aldetrude and jumped in front of her. A bullet went through Teresalina's heart. At that moment, Colonel Dykes, raced from his room, a few yards along the terrace to get the Mother Superior shouting at the tribe man. But the Mother fell, shot and Colonel Dykes collapsed beside her with a bullet in his stomach.

Mrs. Dykes ran from her husband's room to help him but she was also shot dead.

While this went on Mr. Gee Boretto, an Anglo-Indian was killed in the Garden before nine nuns and the nuns were lined up before a firing squad".

Sherwani's martyrdom took place almost under the shadow of the convent walls and he assumed the status of a saint for his sacrifice by delaying the departure of the invaders towards Kashmir:

'Knowing Sherwani's popularity with the people, his captors ordered him to make a public announcement that joining Pakistan was the best solution for Muslims. When he refused, he was chained to the porch posts with ropes, his arms spread out in the shape of a cross and he was told to shout, 'Pakistan Zindabad; Sher-EKashmir Murdabad. They drove nails through the palms of Sherwani's hands, on his forehead. They pressed a jagged piece of tin and wrote on it: 'The punishment of a traitor is death'. Once more Sherwani cried out, 'Victory to Hindu-Muslim unity' and fourteen tribesmen shot bullets into his body'.[412]

Describing his visit to Srinagar at this critical juncture, V.P. Menon writes into his story of the *Integration of the Indian States*, page 397:

'Accompanied by army and our air force officers and by the late D.N. Kachru, I flew by a plane to Srinagar and landed at the airfield. I was oppressed by the stillness as a graveyard all round. From the aerodrome, we went straight to the residence of the State Prime MinisterMehr Chand Mahajan apprised us of the perilous situation and pleaded for the Government of India to come to the rescue of the State. There were practically no State forces left and the raiders had almost reached the outskirts of Baramulla. At this rate, they would be in Srinagar in another day or two. I am certain that the Maharaja had never thought of the possibility of an invasion of his State by tribesmen, nor of the large-scale desertions of Muslims from his army and police. The one hopeful fact was that Brigadier Rajendra Singh promised to hold the raiders as long as possible from reaching Baramulla and we knew that he would fight, if necessary, to the bitter end.

'The first thing to be done was to get the Maharaja and his family out of Srinagar. The Maharaja was quite helpless and if the Indian Government decided not to go to his rescue, there was no doubt of the fate that would befall him and his family in Srinagar. I advised him to leave immediately for Jammu and to take with him his family and valuable possessions'.

‘Just as I was going to sleep, Mahajan rang me up to say that there were rumours that the raiders had infiltrated into Srinagar and that it would be unsafe for us to remain any longer in the city. When we reached the airfield, the place was filled with people, in striking contrast to the deserted appearance when I arrived there the previous evening. We left Srinagar in the first light of the morning of October 25 and immediately on my arrival in Delhi, I went to the meeting of the Defence Committee and reported my impressions of the situation and pointed out the supreme necessity of saving Kashmir from the raiders. At a meeting of the Indian Defence Committee later in the morning of October 26, Lord Mountbatten pressed the view how India could move the troops into Kashmir when Kashmir had not acceded to India. Mr. Menon was consequently sent again but this time to Jammu where he obtained the accession document signed by the Maharaja and an agreement letter that Sheikh Abdullah would carry the responsibilities in the emergency with his Prime Minister’.[412A] Sardar Patel along with Menon went to attend the Defence Committee which had been fixed for the evening of October 26, 1947. In spite of the fact that the two documents signed by the Maharaja were placed before the Defence Committee, Lord Mountbatten tried to delay a decision in the matter. Finding it impossible to prevent the formal accession of the State after the receipt of the Maharaja’s letters and his signed Instrument of Accession, he agreed to accept the accession of the State to the Indian Union after a long discussion, but Lord Mountbatten got a proviso added to it saying that a plebiscite be held in the State after the normalcy had been restored.[413] This clause was added by Lord Mountbatten intentionally that the Muslims of the State under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah would never agree to the final accession of the State to the Indian Dominion.[414]

Sheikh Abdullah left Srinagar on October 25, much before the Maharaja and was with Pt. Nehru in Delhi when final discussion about accession of the State were at crucial stage. He realized hat the success of Pakistani invaders would end not only the dynastic rule of the Maharaja but his own future would be in dark as well so he put his weight in favour of the Indian Union.

Mr. V.P. Menon has categorically stated that ‘even after the decision had been reached, Lord Mountbatten and the three English Chiefs of Staff of the

Indian Army, Navy and Air Force pointed out the risks involved in the operation". But Sardar Patel took a tough stand against the British Generals, Kashmir must be defended at all costs and come what may, resources or no resources. You must do it and assistance will be rendered by the Government. This must, must and must be done. Do whatever you like, arrangements for operation airlift must be ready by the next morning".[415]

The British Generals yielded before Sardar Patel and the movement of the army by air to defend Srinagar started on warfooting. The attitude of the British Generals was to delay the operation only to help the Pakistani invaders to capture Srinagar. Some British officers in the Pakistan Army were also known to have directed the tribal invasion much against the directions of Lord Attlee, the British Prime Minister.[416]

Patiala Force

The only reinforcements the J&K State force had received before the outbreak of hostilities had been from Patiala State. The request for military aid to a brother ruler of Patiala was complied with and an infantry battalion of the Patiala State Forces had moved to Jammu presumably to bolster up the garrison after the fall of Bhimber and a mountain battery from Patiala arrived in Kashmir.[417] Considering the raiders strength and the deployment of the Jammu & Kashmir State forces, these reinforcements were a mere token and their presence could not materially alter the situation.[418]

Gian Chand saves Srinagar

Raizada Gian Chand Bali who was appointed as the Deputy Inspector General of Jammu & Kashmir Police on the recommendations of Sardar Patel because this courageous Police officer had provided protection to Pt. Nehru in October 1946 when he visited the North-West Frontier Province in defiance of the advice of Sir Olaf Caroe, the then Governor of the Province as well as of the Viceroy of India. Mr. Bali, the Police Chief, made this fact known to the people of Srinagar by the beating of a drum that the Indian Government had accepted the State's accession and that Indian forces would be landing in Srinagar any moment by air and warned the pro-

Pakistani elements of dire consequences if they tried to create any trouble . It had the required effect and 26th October passed off peacefully.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad

The other person who played a pivotal role and did yeoman's service during this crisis, he Number the two man in the National Conference, Bakshi Ghuman Mohammad who was really against the accession of the State to Pakistan. He received the Indian army at the Srinagar Airport when they landed at the airfield on the morning of October 27, 1947 and arranged every possible help to save the State from falling into the hands of Pakistani marauders. The common man in the street who was threatened with plunder and raping at the hands of the invaders and Pakistan forces, welcomed the Indian troops as true liberators of Kashmir.

The most accessible unit for movement into the Kashmir valley was the 1st Battalion of the Sikh Regiment which was deployed in Gurgaon District and was commanded by a very capable and efficient Indian officer Lt. Colonel Ranjit Rai and directed by Major-General Russell to report to the Director of Military operations at Army Headquarters.[419] By a dawn to dusk aerial operations, more than a battalion of the 1st Sikh Regiment were ferried to Kashmir and the Dakotas carrying the Indian troops landed on Kashmir soil on October 27, at 9:10 am with almost a complete battalion in strength now available for operations. Lt. Colonel Rai decided to hand over the protection of the airfield to a part of his command and he moved towards Baramulla in the vehicles supplied by the State Army Headquarters.[420]

1st Sikh under Colonel Ranjit Rai's command moved from the airfield towards Pattan and from there to east of Baramulla, a distance of 34 miles from Srinagar, without any contact with the enemy. Debussing his unit, Ranjit Rai placed it in a defensive position on the hills and he made his advance for Baramulla town with a small escort. When the party reached about half way to the town, the tribesmen engaged it with a medium machine gun located on a hill to the south of Baramulla.[421] He had to beat a hasty retreat. In the process, his jeep stuck and he was struck in the face by a burst of automatic fire from a hill on the flank and was killed along with

the platoon commander who was by his side.[422] 1st Sikh, now without a Commanding officer returned to Srinagar airfield where they were met by the Second in Command of the battalion, Major Sampuran Singh who took over the Command and led the battalion back to Pattan and established the battalion in a strong defensive position on the hills commanding the road.[423]

When Jinnah heard that Indian forces had landed in Srinagar on October 27, he reacted swiftly to the Indian move and ordered the acting Commander-in-Chief General Sir Douglas D. Gracy, to send troops to Kashmir. The General, realizing the grave consequences of such an act, was not prepared to follow Jinnah's instructions without the approval of Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck who was the supreme Commander in charge of administering partition of the Indian Army".[424] At Gracey's urgent request, General Auchinleck flew to Lahore on October 28, and informed Mr. Jinnah that as Kashmir was now a part of India, if Pakistan troops moved into it, every British officer serving in the Pakistan Army would be immediately withdrawn.[425] This would cripple the Pakistan army which could not function without the British officers.[426] Jinnah fumed but had no option but to rescind the order.[427] Pakistan's regular troops did move into Kashmir early in 1948 when General Sir Douglas Gracey had succeeded General Messervey as the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army.[428]

While leaving for Jammu on the morning of October 27, Pt. Nehru gave a note to Mr. Mahajan containing the conditions on which the Maharaja Hari Singh had been given military help at such a critical juncture.[429] Pt. Nehru wrote briefly the terms in his own hand:

1. The first one was that His Highness should accede to India with regard to three subjects: Defence, External Affairs and Transport; this he had already done.

2. The second was that the internal administration of the State should be democratized and a new Constitution of the State be framed on the lines of the model already set for the State of Mysore.

3. The third condition was that Sheikh Abdullah should be taken into the administration and made responsible for it along with the Prime Minister.[430]

Maharaja Hari Singh accepted these conditions.

Negotiations Fail

"Jinnah sent a message to Lord Mountbatten through Field Marshal Auchinleck on October 29, 1947, to meet him in conference at Lahore. It was a clever and astute move to make the issue political while invasion was still going and the possible military decision could not be in his favour. Sardar Patel sensing something 'fishy' in Jinnah's game, opposed any Indian leader going to Lahore and warned against appeasing Jinnah who was clearly an aggressor in Kashmir.[430A] Sardar Patel suggested if Jinnah wanted to discuss anything, he should come down to Delhi. "Possibly this was the last opportunity to bring about a quick and peaceful solution of the Kashmir conflict. At this juncture Jinnah, Pt. Nehru and Lord Mountbatten could have solved the imbroglio at the negotiating table, perhaps what bullets, political manouevring and subsequent diplomatic efforts would not have helped the matter. Mountbatten's view prevailed and the Cabinet decided on October 30, that both the Governor-General and the Prime Minister, Pt. Nehru, would go to Lahore. Finally Mountbatten went alone as the doctor had forbidden Pt. Nehru to leave at the last moment because of his indisposition. the Pakistan Government had branded Kashmir's accession to the Indian Union as an act based on fraud and violence and had refused to recognize it".[430B]

'At the conference table, Jinnah proposed that both sides should withdraw from Kashmir. When Mountbatten asked Jinnah to explain how the invaders could be induced to withdraw. Jinnah replied: 'If you do this, I will call the whole thing off'. This made it amply clear that the tribal invasion was completely organized by the Pakistan Government. Lord Mountbatten formally made the offer of plebiscite to Jinnah at the conference table which Jinnah rejected that with the Indian troops in their midst and with Sheikh Abdullah in power, the people of Kashmir would never vote in favour of Pakistan. Lord Mountbatten suggested a plebiscite under the auspices of UNO. This was a clear victory for Jinnah because Mountbatten committed to a course of action which could only internationalize an issue in which

strictly speaking Pakistan had no locus standi after the Maharaja had signed the Instrument of Accession with the Government of India. Pt. Nehru ratified the offer made by Mountbatten to Jinnah at Lahore in his broadcast speech of November 20, in which he declared his readiness to hold the referendum under the international agency UNO".[430C]

Initially the Indian forces suffered heavily but after the reinforcement arrived, they drove out the raiders from the surroundings of Kashmir where they had infiltrated after an orgy of killing, looting, pilage, plunder and rape aided and abetted by Pakistan's armed forces. By November the raiders were cleared off from Badgam, Sumbhal, Shadipur and other adjoining areas of Kashmir. The raiders were driven off from Ganderbal area, Bihama, Tullamulla, Lar, Nunar and other places. The Indian troops continued advancing on all sides in the valley. Sangrama, an important road junction on the BaramullaSrinagar road was also captured.

The Royal Indian Air Force was again in the vanguard of our advances to Uri and the raiders trucks and jeeps were attacked. Mahura fell on November 12 and Uri on November 15 while Baramulla was recaptured on November 8 and the 'open gate' of the Kashmir valley, as seen after its recapture was horrible. The capture of Uri removed any serious threat to Srinagar and the surrounding area.

The mopping-up operations continued till the raiders were driven off from Gulmarg, Tangmarg, Handwara, Bandipora and other places. Srinagar and its surrounding areas were rescued from the ruthless tribals.

The Indian forces besides driving out the raiders from Indian soil created confidence among the local population and enabled them to safe guard their homes and thus helped them in their rehabilitation.

JAMMU FRONT

'The State garrisons being very small in numbers were besieged by the invaders who went on infiltrating across the JammuPathankot border. Supplies were dropped to them by air in Poonch, Mirpur, Bhimber, Kotli, Jhanger and Nowshera areas.

“On November 10, 1947, a small garrison of State troops was encircled in the town of Bagh, managed to fight its way to Poonch, 30 miles away but Bagh fell into the hands of the enemy. Three garrisons of State forces besieged in Mirpur, Bhimber, Kotli, Jhanger and Nowshera were finally relieved from the raiders. On November 18, 1947, a contact was made with the State forces garrison at Nowshera and on November 19, a small State forces garrison at Jhanger, surrounded by raiders was also relieved.’ On November 18, the raiders captured Rajouri helped by armed Muslim military dissenters of State forces. The Indian troops relieved Berri Pattan on the same day”.[431]

“Poonch principality became the centre of disturbances immediately after August 15, 1947. Sardar Mohd. Ibrahim Khan, the member of Praja Sabha from Bagh Sudhnutt, who was sent to England by Raja Jagat Dev Singh of Poonch on his expenses to study abroad was practising Law at Srinagar, rushed to Poonch and started underground activities against the Maharaja of the State in June 1947. On October 24, 1947, Sardar Ibrahim Khan formed the ‘Azad Kashmir’ Government at Plandri in Poonch principality.

Brigadier L.P. Sen of the Indian forces stationed at Uri was directed to move towards Poonch via Hajipur for the relief of Poonch town. Due to the burning of an important Chanjal bridge in the base of Hajpura, the Indian offensive brigade could not move towards Poonch. Only Brigadier Sen, Lt. Colonel Pritam Singh and Kumaun Battalion marched on foot towards Poonch and reached the town on November 20. After assessing the situation, Brigadier L.P. Sen directed Lt. Colonel Pritam Singh to command Poonch garrison and he returned Uri. Immediately after the return of Uri Brigade, the raiders again cut off Uri-Poonch road. In these circumstances, the first task before Pritam Singh was to link up with the country. About 10,000 locals helped in constructing the airstrip working day and night from the last week of November while Pritam Singh concentrated on the defence of Poonch. On December 12, 1947, Air Vice Marshal, Mukherjee (subsequently Chief of Air Staff) and Air Commodore, Mehr Singh landed there in a Beech Craft and in another ten days, Dakota (C-47) transport aircrafts were landed there. In the first flight Sheikh Abdullah and Gopalaswamy Ayenger visited Poonch, met people, heard their problems

sympathetically and the people living in the besieged city got some relief."[432]

Gilgit Lost

Soon after the lapse of the paramountcy in India, the lease of Gilgit came to an end and the Civil and Military Control of the Gilgit Wazarat went back to the Maharaja.[432A]

Jammu & Kashmir acceded to the Indian Union on October 26, 1947 after Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession in his capacity as the ruler of the State but lost the strategic area of Gilgit. It was on November 1, 1947, that the Governor of Gilgit, Brigadier Ghansana Singh who had been appointed by the Maharaja Hari Singh to take over the charge of Gilgit Wazarat from the British Political Agent, Lt. Colonel Bacon, August 1, 1947, was taken into custody and a Provincial Government was installed at Gilgit led by a local Subedar, Rias Khan, and consisting of Major Brown, SubedarMajor Babur Khan, Captain Ehsan Ali, Captain Hussain, Captain Sayeed, Lt. Haider, Captain Mohammad Khan and Wazir Wilayat Ali, Revenue Assistant of the State administration on leave at Gilgit. They started planning to attack Bunji Garrison. Captain Matheson, the second British Officer at the Chilas post, was instructed by the Provisional Government to annex Astore and to cut off the line of withdrawal of the Bunji Garrison. Major Brown and Captain Hussain attacked the Sikh detachment from the Gilgit side and the Muslims of the 6th Infantry and Gilgit scouts raided this post at night and shot dead everybody except one person who managed to cross the river Indus on a log of wood.[433]

After a fortnight of the Governor's arrest, one Sardar Mohammad Alam Khan, a Pathan reached Gilgit by air from Peshawar and took over as the Political Agent of Gilgit. One Colonel Mohammed Aslam Khan of regular Pakistan Army, son of Brigadier Rehmat Ullah Khan of Jammu & Kashmir State Forces took over the charge of civil administration at Gilgit under the Government of Pakistan.

It was on January 15, 1949, after the cease fire that the Governor Brig. Ghansara Singh was repatriated at Suchetgarh but the strategic area of Gilgit was lost for good.[434]

First Radio Station

"It was during the Maharaja's time that broadcasting was undertaken in the State and the State's first Radio Station was set up in Jammu on December 1, 1947, which was indeed the most important development in the field of public information. This station was operated from the three rooms of the Government Ranbir High School with one kilowatt medium wave transmitter and was inaugurated by Maharani, Tara Devi. It was installed with a view to counter the Pakistani propaganda. A radio station was started at Srinagar in July 1948 and it may be recalled that broadcasting formed a part of the State Government till 1954 when it was taken over by the Government of India".[434A]

Emergency Administration

An accession to the Indian Union meant the signature of Maharaja Hari Singh's death warrant so far as his own powers were concerned.[435]

When the Indian forces in Kashmir made some gains and recaptured the areas from the intruders, a Conference was held at the residence of Pt. Nehru where besides, Sardar Patel, V.P. Menon, Sheikh Abdullah and Mehr Chand Mahajan joined. Sheikh Abdullah demanded that he should be appointed the Prime Minister of the State and Mr. Mahajan should serve as the 'Dewan' with no powers.[436] After long discussion it was decided that Sheikh Abdullah be designated as the 'Head of the Emergency Administration' and to carry out the administration of Kashmir Province[437] while Bakshi Mohammad Ghulam to be appointed as the Deputy Head of the Jammu & Kashmir Administration in charge of Jammu affairs. Within days after assuming the emergency administration, Sheikh Abdullah issued ordinances on his own without the approval of the Maharaja and he transgressed all limits as the law-making power which were vested only with the Maharaja.[438]

Jammu Front

The Defence Minister of India, Sardar Baldev Singh along with the Acting Head of the Jammu Administration, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, visited Samba thirty miles from Jammu on January 28, 1948 and saw smoke rising on the horizon from some villages which had been burnt and looted by the raiders two days ago.[439] Thousands of refugees pouring into Samba en route to Jammu surrounded their jeep asking for protection and succour.

Lt. General, Cariappa, G.O.C.-in-c Delhi and East Punjab area, accompanied by Major General Kulwant Singh, commanding Indian forces in Jammu & Kashmir paid a visit to Samba and Ramgarh area on January 29, along the Pathankot road close to the Pakistani border. On the way General Cariappa saw streams of villages hiking their way to Jammu after the raids from across the border.[440] General Cariappa urged the fleeing refugees to go back and fight the raiders.

During his visit to Naushera and other forward positions, General Cariappa was impressed by the devotion to duty of the Indian forces. He specially praised a company of the Sikhs who had lost their everything in Punjab and had no news of their relations ever since the disturbances had wiped out their homes.

Hordes of raiders - Pathans, men from Swat, Dhir, Sudhans and other tribesmen and the Regular Pakistan Army- launched simultaneous concerted attacks on Indian positions around Naushera on February 6 but were repulsed and made to flee, well over two thousand killed by Indian troops under Brigadier M. Osman.

“When the Naushera battle was almost over, Brigadier M. Osman was congratulated on this victory by G.O.C.-in-C, Delhi and East Punjab, General Cariappa, and Deputy Prime Minister of India, Sardar Patel congratulated Osman through a letter addressed to Sardar Baldev Singh. The letter reads: “I should be grateful if you kindly convey to Brigadier Osman and his men, my heartiest congratulations on their success in the recent operations, early in February, against the raiders and my warmest appreciation of the courage , valour and determination with which they have repulsed such serious attacks on our positions in Naushera. Their

achievement on this occasion is in the best traditions of the Indian army and we are all proud of it." To the misfortune of India, this valiant soldier was shot dead on July 3, 1948, while defending the State. India's loss became Pakistan's gain.

"The hero of Naushera gave his life while in action against the raiders at Jhangar and till his last breath fought like a dauntless warrior and a true patriot of the nation. His name, along with Colonel Ranjit Rai and Major P.C. Sharma would top the martyrs who fought and died for the liberation of Kashmir and the honour of their motherland. Later, in April following Brigadier Osman's achievement in Naushera and Jhanger in routing out the enemy, the so-called Azad Kashmir Government had offered a reward of Rupees fifty-three thousand to any person capturing Brigadier Osman. According to a spokesman of the National Conference, this was regarded as a sure indication of frustration having set in among the raiders."[441]

Indian troops continued their slow but systematic advances. One of the biggest achievements of the Indian army in Jammu and Kashmir was that the supply Jammu and Kashmir was that the supply foot-high Banihal pass continued despite thirty feet of snow and avalanches. Thanks to their efforts from December 1947 to the end of March 1948, three convoys consisting of three hundred vehicles got through to Srinagar.[442] Among the Indian troops who fought valiantly for the motherland were the men drawn from the Marathas, Madrasi, Kumaon, Mahar, Rajput, Garhwali, Dogra, Jat, Ahir and other regiments.[443]

Several areas of the State such as Muzaffarabad, Poonch District, Mirpur, Bhimber, Kotli and areas of Deva Batala were lost to Pakistan mainly because the Indian forces sent to protect the State territories were all detained in Srinagar by the Head of the Emergency Administration and were not sent to trouble spots simply because the sufferers in all these places were Hindus and Sikhs. On a rough estimate as many as 15,000 in Bhimber, 5000 in Kotli, 20,000 in Poonch, 10,000 in Muzaffarabad, 5000 in Reasi, 2000 in Bhaderwah and Kishtwar tehsils besides some 3000 in Gilgit and Ladakh were massacred by the Pakistani marauders in cold blood during the unprovoked aggression.

“ In the conflict of wills with my father, Sheikh Abdullah had a major advantage in the whole hearted support of Pt. Nehru against the constant harassment let loose by Sheikh Abdullah. The former Prime Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, Gopalaswamy Ayyangar, was also in Jawaharlal’s cabinet and because of his intimate knowledge of the State, his services were used on several occasions in dealing with Kashmir affairs. That this was deeply resented by the Sardar is evident from the correspondence published in the first volume of his letters, which reveals that at one stage this became so serious as to threaten a major rift between the two great leaders and that the Sardar wrote out (but did not dispatch) his resignation on this very issue.”
“The correspondence includes several appeals on behalf of my father against the constant harassment and humiliation directed at him by the Sheikh and evidently the Sardar did intervene on several occasions to sort things out. But the main issue at the time was the Security Council deliberations and the necessity of making drastic changes in the internal administration of the State could not be evaded. It seems that at first the ‘ Mysore Madel’ was mooted under which Sheikh Abdullah would be appointed Head of the Administration and my father would have a Dewan to look after the ‘Reserved Subjects’. Something on these lines was in fact attempted for a while but riding a popular wave as he was, Sheikh Abdullah was clearly in no mood to accept anything short of a complete transfer of power.”

‘The correspondence also shows that my father was very unhappy with the military campaign against the raiders. This is clear from a long and passionate letter that he wrote to the Sardar on January 31, 1948. After a lengthy description of the unsatisfactory military situation, the neverending influx of refugees and the deadlocked security council deliberations, he made some remarks which reveal his state of mind at the time and also contain the first hint of his possible withdrawal from the scene’[444]
Maharaja Hari Singh wrote a detailed letter to Sardar Patel about his helplessness in the following way:”My position as a ruler has become very anomalous and one of great perplexity. People in the State continue sending me telegrams and asking for help. Our Civil administration is now in the hands of the National Conference and military operations are now in the hands of the Indian Union. I have no voice or power either on the civil or

military side. The State forces are under the Indian Army Commanders. The result, therefore, is that I have just to watch a terrible situation in a helpless manner, to look on at the abduction of women, killing and loss of my people without power to give them any redress whatever. You will realize that my position is getting most awkward every day, so long as the military situation is adverse to us and refugees continue pouring into the city and daily raids from Pakistan keep on coming without any reply from us."

"Sometimes I feel that I should withdraw this accession that I have made to the Indian Union. The Union only provisionally accepted the Accession and if the Union cannot recover back our territory and is going eventually to agree to the decision of the Security Council which may result in handing over to Pakistan, then there is no point in sticking to the Accession of the State to the Indian Union. For the time being it may be possible to have better terms from Pakistan but that is immaterial because eventually it would mean an end of the dynasty and end of the Hindus and Sikhs in the State. There is an alternative possible for me and that is to withdraw the accession and that may kill the reference to the UNO, because the Indian Union will have no right to continue the proceedings before the Council, if the accession is withdrawn. The result may be a return to the position the State held before the accession. The difficulty in that situation, however, will be that the Indian troops cannot be maintained in the State, except as volunteers to help the State. I am prepared to take over command of my own forces along with the forces of the Indian Army as volunteers to help the State. I am prepared to lead my army personally and to command, if the Indian Union agrees, also their troops. I know my country much better than of your Generals will know and I am prepared to take the venture boldly rather than merely keep on sitting here doing nothing. It is for you to consider whether the Indian Union will accept this in both situations, whether after the withdrawal of the accession or even if the accession continues. I am tired of my present life and it is much better to die fighting than watch helplessly the heartbreaking misery of my people.'

"Another alternative that strikes me is that if I can do nothing I should leave the State (short of abdication) and reside outside so that people do not think that I can do anything for them. For their grievances they can hold the civil administration or the Indian forces that are in charge of the

defence of the State. The responsibility will then clearly be either of the Indian Union or the administration of Sheikh Abdullah. If there is any criticism, those responsible can have it and the responsibility for the suffering of the people will not be mine. Of course, I will anticipate that, as people started saying when I left Kashmir only on Mr. Menon's advice that I had run away from Srinagar they will say I have left them in their hour of misery, but it is no use remaining in a position where one can do nothing to avoid criticism. Of course, if I go out of the State I will have to take the public into confidence and tell them the reason why I am going out."

Sardar Patel wrote in the Maharaja's response

" I fully realize what an anxious time you must be having. I can assure you that I am no less anxious about the Kashmir situation and what is happening in the UNO, but whatever the present situation may be, a counsel of despair is entirely out of place."

At a meeting held in Delhi towards the end of February 1948 where Mr. Girija Shanker Bajpai, Secretary General in the External affairs Ministry and Sir Gopalaswamy Ayyangar were present, Pt. Nehru proposed that Maharaja Hari Singh should issue a declaration appointing Sheikh Abdullah as his Prime Minister leaving the Mahajan with the title of Dewan. It was considered that such a declaration would strengthen the position of India in the Security Council where the matter was pending. But before the final proclamation was drawn up and be issued, Sir Gopalaswamy Ayyangar visited the State in early March 1948 to advise the Maharaja to end the Emergency Administration and appoint Sheikh Abdulla, once his fiercest enemy as the Prime Minister.[445] Pt. Nehru wanted Sheikh Abdullah to be given a free hand to handle the administration of the State.

While the military operations were in progress to evacuate the raiders from the State, preparations were initiated in the State to establish a popular government under Sheikh Abdullah to guide the destinies of his people.

The resignation of Mehr Chand Mahajan was followed by a proclamation by the Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir State who gave an assurance that all sections of the State would have equal opportunities of service on the basis of merits irrespective of creed or community. According to the Royal

Proclamation, Maharaja Hari Singh appointed Sheikh Abdulla as the Prime Minister of the State with effect from March 1, 1948 and four representatives of the State were appointed to represent the State in the Constituent Assembly of India. This proclamation contained the details about the office and functions of the Dewan Thakur Baldev Singh Pathania, the definition and administration of the reserved subjects, the future of the J&K State Forces and establishment of a fully democratic constitution based on adult franchise with a hereditary ruler as the Constitutional head.[446]

Sheikh Abdulla

Instead of having a more tighter noose over his administration because of the State being a theatre of war, the Indian Government treated Sheikh Abdullah as a de facto Sultan of the State from the very beginning. Pt. Nehru considered to be a poor judge of men, decided to give Sheikh Abdullah a long rope as would have prompted even a sane man to hang himself with shame. Kanwar Sir Dilip Singh, India's agent in Jammu & Kashmir State who was supposed to watch the interests of India and to guide Sheikh Abdullah accordingly, was quick to notice the dangerously independent and nourishing anti-Indian feelings of Sheikh Abdullah, had warned the Indian Government to exercise a check over him.[447] But instead of taking into consideration his report, he was asked not to interfere with Sheikh Abdullah's administration and rather be guided by him.[448] In disgust he resigned and went back to Delhi, Sheikh Abdullah required no Indian guidance because he had numerous communists around him to guide him towards 'Independent Kashmir' which suited their overall strategy for a communist revolution in India.

Under the patronage and wholehearted support of Pt. Nehru, Sheikh Abdullah heaped allegation after allegation on both, the Maharaja as well as the Maharani, Tara Devi, when he accused them for distributing guns to the activists of the R.S.S. to kill Muslims in cold blood. In his autobiography ***Flames of Chinar****, Page 97, he alleges that* "En route from Kashmir to Jammu, he laid the foundation stone of communalism by refusing to drink tea served by a Muslim bearer attached to the rest-house at Ramban. Upon reaching Jammu, Maharani Tara Devi and he distributed arms among

communal Hindus and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh volunteers. The Muslims of Jammu were assured of a safe passage to Pakistan but were massacred at a place called Samba. No doubt, these killings were organized by the Maharaja, his bigoted wife, and Mehr Chand Mahajan. In this intrigue, Tara Devi played an important role. She was under the influence of a mysterious guru, Sant Dev, described by some people as the Rasputin of Kashmir."

Sheikh Abdullah had organized a Kashmiri Volunteers Corps and requested Pt. Nehru to supply 303 rifles to them. Rifles were dispatched to the Commander of the Indian Forces located in the State. But some how the supply was delayed to Sheikh Abdullah's volunteers. In a complaint to Pt. Nehru, Sheikh Abdullah alleged that arms sent for the use of the National Conference volunteers were distributed by the Prime Minister of the State to its rival organization, the Rashtroya Swayamsevak Singh. The unfounded allegation was not only false but malicious to implicate the royal family because Pt. Nehru took the complaint of Sheikh Abdullah as gospel truth. But when challenged by the Prime Minister, Mehr Chand Mahajan, to prove his allegations, Pt. Nehru in his reply promptly withdrew the allegation, expressed regret and said that he had been misinformed.[450]

After clinching the powers of the State, Sheikh Abdullah behaved like a despot and left no occasion to goad and vilify the Maharaja and thus the tension between the two soared new heights. Dr. Karan Singh, the son of Maharaja Hari Singh, in his autobiography *Heir Apparent* has recorded the causes of conflict between the two in this manner; Page 83 onwards:

"One was the future of the Jammu and Kashmir State Forces, of which my father remained Commander-in-Chief. Sheikh Abdullah evidently demanded that with his appointment as Prime Minister the administrative control of the State Forces should be transferred to him. When this was strenuously objected to, he suggested that their operational and administrative control be handed over to the Indian Army. While operationally the forces had been under the Indian Army control ever since the invasion, my father was evidently reluctant that their entity should be entirely merged with the Indian Army.

In a long and angry letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, Sheikh Abdullah made a frontal attack on the State Forces, accused them of all sorts of crimes and misdemeanours, and insisted that their separate entity should cease and that they should be entirely taken over by the Indian Army. To add to the pressure, he informed my father that his government had decided to stop all the salaries and allowances of these troops with effect from August 16, 1948. The conflict continued for a long time, and it was only some years later that the merger with the Indian Army took place."

"Another source of conflict were the 'Reserved Subjects' which were supposed to have been left under my father 's authority, including pensions of various types of members of the ruling family, the hospitality(Tawaza) department and so on."

"Then there was the question of land reforms. The Sheikh and his party were pressing for radical; changes in the land tenancy system, while my father was obviously opposed to any such move."

"The Dharmrath Trust, a religious endowment created by the founder of the State, Maharaja Gulab Singh, which administered over a hundred Hindu temples and shrines in different parts of the State, also became a bone of contention. This trust spent several lakhs of rupees on the feeding of refugees in Jammu after the invasion, but Sheikh Abdullah charged that Dharmarth money had been used for political purposes, although this allegation was never proved and was anxious that his government should take over the Trust and its extensive assets. This matter became the subject of an intense and bitter controversy and ultimately Sardar Patel had to personally intervene and a compromise was worked out whereby my father remained sole trustee, but a reputed firm of Chartered Accountants was appointed to undertake a thorough audit of the Trust funds."

"My father and Sheikh Abdullah represented two political cultures so dissimilar and disparate that the possibility of any compromise was virtually nonexistent. My father belonged to the feudal order and with all his intelligence and ability was not able to accept the new dispensation and swallow the populist policies of Sheikh Abdullah. The Sheikh, on the other hand, while a charismatic mass leader and a superb orator in Kashmiri, was imbued with a bitterly antiDogra and anti- monarchical attitude. His socio-

economic policy spelt out several years earlier in a pamphlet entitled ‘Naya Kashmir’ was based on egalitarian and socialistic thinking in which the ruler, at best, would be a powerless figurehead.”

“The hostility between my father and the Kashmiri leader was greatly heightened by the fact that his move to Jammu on the night of October 27, 1947, in the wake of the tribal invasion (on the insisted advice of V.P. Menon) was seized upon by the Sheikh to attack and malign him in bitter and brutal fashion. It was presented to the country and the world that here was a cowardly ruler who fled his capital in the dead of night along with his family, jewels and courtiers, leaving his people to face the fury of the approaching onslaught. The irony of the situation lay in the fact that Sheikh Abdullah himself had flown to Delhi on 25 October, two days before we left Srinagar, and did not return until after the Indian Army arrived. Even worse, my father was publicly accused by Sheikh Abdullah of having fermented communal riots in Jammu in which Muslims had been massacred, and for years he would say in his speeches that the hands of the Dogras were ‘***dyed in blood***’ . For a proud and highly sensitive man like my father, these attacks were naturally a source of great anguish and anger. It is to his abiding credit that despite tremendous provocation, he maintained a dignified silence in the public, and for the rest of his life said or did nothing that could have harmed the national interest at that critical juncture.”

Sheikh Abdullah supported Kashmir’s accession to the Indian Union for his selfish motives and he suffered from the follie de grandeur of becoming a virtual Sultan of Kashmir to rule over a highly important strategic region.[450A] He had aligned with the Indian National Congress and particularly with Pt. Nehru because he knew that he would save his movement from the charge of communalism. Sheikh Abdullah had only one ambition- power for him and for that he used bullying and aggressive tactics to achieve it.[451]

CEASEFIRE

The command and central structure in Jammu and Kashmir was reorganized on May 1, 1948,[452] General Kulwant Singh, the commander of Indian forces operating in the State, was appointed as the Chief of the General

Staff in Delhi, and after his departure, two separate divisional headquarters were raised- Jammu Division under the command of Major General Atma Singh, to be responsible for operations south of Pir Panjal, and Kashmir Division under Major-General, K.S. Thimayya, for operations in areas north of Pir Panjal.[452] Logistically Poonch was transferred to Jammu Division.

Indian military operations in the State would have completely cleared the raiders had Lord Mountbatten not persuaded Pt. Nehru to agree to a cease-fire when the Indian forces had made some gains and were in commanding position.[454]

Ceasefire resulted in India's loss of Jammu and Kashmir State's one-third territory and it lost control of Gilgit, Hunza, Battistan, Muzaffarabad-Kotli-Mirpur areas which broadly came to be termed as Pakistan occupied Kashmir. Had these areas of Poonch-Kotli-Mirpur remained with India, it would have been in a position to pose a major military threat to Pakistan, West Punjab and also to the North-West Frontier Province.[455] The Frontiers created through the Karachi Ceasefire Agreement with Pakistan, posed a new strategic threat to India because hostile elements now held large parts of Jammu & Kashmir across the ceasefire line from Manavar in Akhnoor sector of Jammu to Shyok in Ladakh.[456] Creation of Pakistan occupied Kashmir shrank the Western borders of the State and provided a defensive cushion for Pakistan's heartland.[457]

The attitude adopted by Lord Mountbatten, Lockhart and Bucher in dealing with the unprovoked aggression of Pakistan in 1947, 'scuttled the instinctive reactions of Pt. Nehru and Sardar Patel towards Pakistan invasion. 'These three persons not just advised but bulldozed decisions against the wishes of Pt. Nehru which resulted in India losing its one-third territory [458]. Pt. Nehru had decided by December 1947-January 1948 that the Indian armed forces should launch military operations against Pakistan, exercising relevant strategic operations to ensure Pakistan's withdrawal from Jammu and Kashmir. Lord Mountbatten vetoed this advice as the Chairman of the Defence Council.

UNO

It was he who gave the basic advice to Pt.

Nehru to go to the United Nations, to offer a plebiscite with the general assurance that the British Government in combination with the United States would initiate effective action through the U.N. leading to Pakistan's complete withdrawal from Jammu & Kashmir. The inputs received from Maj. Gen. Kulwant Singh commanding the forces in Jammu & Kashmir and from General Thimmaya and Carriappa in the high military echelons of the Western Command nevertheless made Pt. Nehru insist that while the political option of going to the U.N. was being exercised, India should simultaneously plan a military campaign against Pakistan to ensure an action of aggression in the State. Such orders were given to the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, General Lockhart who insisted to Pt. Nehru that it would not be possible to expel Pakistan-sponsored raiders from the Jhelum valley till the spring of 1948. Lord Mountbatten had cautioned Pt. Nehru launching any military operation against Pakistan on the signal of the Attlee Government. It was only the clarity of purpose and innovation of General Thimmayya and General Kulwant Singh which resulted in the successes of the limited operations they were allowed to undertake in Jammu & Kashmir.

Pakistan used force to change a legal and constitutional decision, to which it was a party, and it was India that referred this matter to the United Nations seeking a peaceful solution. There were strong suggestions from India's military commanders conducting operations in Jammu & Kashmir in 1947 and in 1948 that they needed only a few more weeks time to push back all Pakistani personnel out of the State and that India need not go to the United Nations. Lt. General Kulwant Singh, senior commander to the Indian forces in Jammu & Kashmir at that time, was categorical in giving this advice to the Indian Government."[459]

"Two high level India-Pakistan Joint Committees, the Partition Committee and the Joint Defence Council continued to sort out the residual problems emerging from partition. By November-December, the deliberations of these bodies were overshadowed by the conflict in Kashmir. The last meeting of this series was held on December 8, 1947, with Liaqat Ali Khan and Pt. Nehru as principal participants. Liaqat Ali Khan had destroyed the prospects of any constructive discussions by sending a telegram in which he described Sheikh Abdullah as a 'Quisling' of India and accused the

Government of India of eliminating the whole the Muslim of Jammu & Kashmir. The deadlock was final between India and Pakistan by midDecember 1947."[459A] Apprehensive of the armed conflict in Kashmir escalating into a fullfledged war between the two Dominions which Pt. Nehru wanted to avoid at all costs, Lord Mountbatten pressed Pt. Nehru to refer the matter to the United Nations and to invoke its good offices for peaceful settlement of the problem. On December 31, 1947, without consulting his Cabinet colleagues, Pt. Nehru decided to appeal to the U.N. Security Council under Article 35 of the U.N. chapter VI (and not under chapter VII which envisages economic and financial sanctions against the aggressor) to ask Pakistan to desist from aiding the raiders entering the Kashmir State from and through Pakistan territory in the interest of maintaining international peace. No self-respecting country would have voluntarily invited the interference of world powers through the U.N.O. in a domestic affair.

For Sardar Patel no problem was too formidable to tackle and he was not enthusiastic about Pt. Nehru who was handling the Kashmir affair.

On January 1, 1948, the Indian representative at the United Nations, Mr. P.P. Pillai, transmitted a telegraphic communication to the President of the Security Council containing a complaint that a serious situation had developed owing to the aid which invaders got from Pakistan and endangering the peace of the subcontinent. India in her complaint informed the Security Council that it had accepted the accession of the State to the Indian Union offered by the Maharaja himself on October 26, 1947, as also the ruler's appeal for help against the invaders which was supported by the largest popular organization in Kashmir, the National Conference headed by Sheikh Abdullah.[460]

The complaint by India against Pakistan to the U.N.O. was Pt. Nehru's second blunder in handling the Kashmir question. It was a clear diplomatic victory for Pakistan because the Pakistan Government had its informers in the Indian foreign office who continued to inform them the exact details of the Indian complaint. Secondly the presence of Pakistani agents in the Indian Foreign Office gave an edge over India in its diplomacy. The Indian Government got disillusioned from the very beginning because the Security

Council placed India and Pakistan, the victim of aggression and the aggressor, on the same status and started to consider Pakistan's counter charges which were unrelated to the issue, along with the question of Jammu & Kashmir. It was Pakistan's diplomatic victory which was successful in politicizing and internationalizing an issue in which she had no locus standi.[460A]

In order to expose the underhand tactics adopted by Pakistan and to bring about a peaceful settlement on the Kashmiri issue, Pt. Nehru said, "Since Pakistan was unwilling to cooperate with us in this manner, the alternatives left to us were to send the armed forces across Pakistan territory for dealing effectively with the invaders or to request the United Nations to ask Pakistan to do so. Any resort to the first course would have involved an armed conflict with Pakistan. We were anxious to avoid this and to try every available method to find a peaceful solution. Therefore, the only course left open to us was to make a reference to the Secretary Council."

N. Gopalaswamy Ayyengar, a former Prime Minister of Jammu & Kashmir State and at that time a Minister in the Central Cabinet was nominated to head the delegation while its other members were M.C. Setalvad, the Attorney General of India, Sheikh Abdullah, the head of the State Government and Colonel B.M. Kaul

The Security Council heard Gopalaswamy's arguments on January 15, and the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Zaffar Ullah Khan on January 16 and 17,1948, Ayyengar told the Security Council that India had been forced to bring the Kashmir question before the Security Council because of its failure to reach agreement in direct negotiation with Pakistan owing to "Pakistan's intransigence and lack of cooperation" and so requested the Security Council to "use its influence and power to persuade the Government of Pakistan to prevent its nationals from participating in the raids and deny aid to the invaders."[461]

The Pakistan Foreign Minister refuted India's charges against Pakistan and amplified Pakistan's allegation against India that the evacuation from Jammu & Kashmir of all elements foreign to the State including tribesmen and Indian Army troops as a first step to the solution of the question.[462]

Britain wanted Kashmir to accede to Pakistan so Lord Mountbatten made best efforts to delay Kashmir's accession to India when the raiders were barely a few miles away from Srinagar. Britain's stand on accession and the position it took in the United Nations Security Council over Kashmir, caused great hurt to Pt. Nehru and Indo-British relations dipped to the lowest level during the fifties and sixties.[463]

"To the Indian intelligentsia this decision of the Indian Government remained a puzzle. The question that is persistently asked since then is: Why did India appeal to the U.N.O.? Was it our Prime Minister Pt. Nehru's idealism and faith in the U.N.O. or his lack of faith in the country's armed forces to deal with the raiders? The fear of bloodshed was one of the determining factors and a weakness for the Pakistanis influenced him to knock at the door of the U.N. rather than to knock out the source of the whole mischief in Kashmir."[464] Pakistan was happy against whom the complaint was lodged in the Security Council where it spewed venom and discredited her in the august body by heaping fantastic allegations against India. Being more practical and less scrupulous than the Indian leaders and thus they succeeded in securing the support from the Anglo-American block, whose interest lay in appeasing Pakistan so as to be able to use its air bases for a spy mission over the Soviet Union rather than holding the verdict of the U.N. Fortunately India could not hold out against the Western onslaught till the Soviet union sensing the AngloAmerican motives in supporting Pakistan on the issue, rescued India with its power of the veto."[464A]

When there was very little progress to recover the areas captured by the raiders, Maharaja Hari Singh in a letter to Sardar Patel dated January 31, 1948, threatened to withdraw the accession because the decision of the Security Council might go in Pakistan's favour. When Pt. Nehru came to know about the Maharaja's views, he asked Sardar Patel to persuade him not to resort to this course because it would invite trouble for him and for us." Had the Maharaja actually withdrawn the accession of his State to the Indian Union, there would have been a great constitutional crisis as the Indian Government had no locus standi in the Security Council and the case in the United Nations would have become (null and void) redundant.[465] On the persuasion of Sardar Patel the Maharaja dropped his contemplated

decision as he always cooperated with the Indian Union but he was not treated properly and was rather humiliated.

On January 17, 1948, the Security Council through a resolution asked both the aggressor (Pakistan) and the victim (India) to improve the situation but did not call upon Pakistan as had been demanded by India to stop all aid to the invaders and bring to an end the hostilities.

On March 10, 1948, Security Council President, Dr. Tsing of China submitted a draft resolution asking the Pakistan Government to use its best efforts to withdraw the intruding tribesmen and Pakistani nationals from the Jammu and Kashmir State by denying transit and other facilities to all elements engaged in hostility and violence against the State.

On August 11, 1948, the five nation commission constituted by the Security Council, proposed ceasefire to both the Governments of India and Pakistan. On August 19, 1948, the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Zafar Ullah belatedly admitted that Pakistani troops had moved in Jammu & Kashmir State. On January 1, 1949, the ceasefire between the two countries was made effective and it was signed by Colonel Manekshaw on behalf of Commander-in-chief of India, General Sir Roy Bucher.

Pt. Nehru's willingness to accept a ceasefire was honed by his own Kashmiri origin and undoubtedly by Sheikh Abdullah's constant advice of the ethnic and linguistic dissimilarity of Kashmiris with the Muslims of Poonch, Mirpur, Muzzafarabad and Gilgit.[466] Once the raiders had been pushed back from the valley, the largely Hindu and Sikh Towns of Poonch safeguarded and the road to Ladakh cleared at Kargil, Pt. Nehru was no more keen to pursue the wars.[467]

The Indian Government did a singular disservice to the people of Jammu by not bringing the truth to the notice of the United Nations, the brutalities committed by the raiders on the people living adjacent to the border. Pt. Nehru was not only unjust to the Maharaja but also to the heroic people of Jammu who fought relentlessly and saved the vital link between Kashmir and East Punjab falling into Pakistan's control which would have made the Kashmir operation infructuous.[467A]

Abdication

When in February 1949, Yuvraj Karan Singh returned to India after his hip-injury treatment in America, the political scenario had changed to its worst and it was even an impossible task for Sardar Patel to restrain Sheikh Abdullah. The tension between the Maharaja Hari Singh and Prime Minister of the State, Sheikh Abdullah had reached a point of no return. The bitterness between the Dogras and Kashmiris had cropped up again with dramatic reversal of their roles after a century of Dogra rule.[468] Dr. Karan Singh writes in *Heir Apparent*, Page 91 onwards:

" *Soon thereafter my father received an invitation from Sardar Patel suggesting that he, my mother and I should visit Delhi for consultations." We left in a chartered DC-3. Little did I realize as we boarded the plane that only my father's ashes would ever return to beloved Jammu"*.

Though they were uncomfortable in each others company yet Maharaja Hari Singh hosted a lunch for Pt. Nehru at the Imperial Hotel in New Delhi where the royal family stayed up after being invited by Sardar Patel. The Maharaja in his conversation with Pt. Nehru made it crystal clear to him that 'Sheikh Abdullah is the undisputed leader of Kashmir and will be very useful to you. But keep him in check.' The Maharaja further told him,' I have dealt with him for 17 years. Do not give him too long a rope.' Pt. Nehru known for his short temper, walked out in a huff from the lunch, but his prediction like a sooth sayer proved true.

When in the later few years Sheikh Abdullah drifted away from his avowed friend.

Dr. Karan Singh further records in *Heir Apparent*, Page 92: "Evidently Jawaharlal had left it to the Sardar to get down to brass tacks with him. On 29th April, we had a meal with the Sardar also, at which his daughter Maniben and his Private Secretary V. Shanker were present. After dinner my parents and the Sardar went into another room, and it was there that the blow fell. The Sardar told my father gently but firmly that although Sheikh Abdullah was pressing for his abdication, the Government of India felt that it would be sufficient if he and my mother absented themselves from the State for a few months. This, he said, was in the national interest in view of

the complications arising from the plebiscite proposal then being actively pursued in the United Nations. He added that as I had now returned from America, I should be appointed Regent by my father to carry out his duties and responsibilities during his absence. He emerged from the meeting ashen-faced while my mother was fighting desperately to keep back her tears. The Sardar also looked grim as he saw us to the door we drove back to the hotel in silence. My father immediately got into a huddle with his advisers, Bakshi Tek Chand and Mehr Chand Mahajan and his staff officers. My mother went to her room where she flung herself on her bed and burst into tears."[29]

Sardar Patel without mincing any words had delivered the catastrophic brutal blow to the Maharaja engineered by the nexus of Pt. Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah who had emerged as a self the aggrandizing leviathan being the product of the majority community of Kashmir but with an opportunistic self. The Maharaja's ouster from the State was the result of individual revenge and political vendetta of his staunch opponents." It is even generally believed that the Maharaja's exile from the State was the direct result of Pt. Nehru's arrest episode at Kohala[469] where Pt. Nehru's entry in the State was restricted."

In a tete-a-tete over the breakfast table in Teen Murti House which lasted almost an hour, Pt. Nehru told young Yuvraj Karan Singh: "That a new India was being created, that the old feudal order was rapidly collapsing and that as a young man I should readily adjust myself to the new situation. He then went on to outline the Kashmir problem, the role of Sheikh Abdullah and the importance in the national interest of establishing a harmonious situation in the State." He said briefly that my father was unable or unwilling to accept the new dispensation, and that both he and Sheikh Abdullah were of the view that I should be appointed Regent so as to solve the present deadlock. When he spoke of the future of India his eyes glowed with a gentle fire and his voice took on a ringing note."[470]

Maharaja Hari Singh acquiesced after the initial shock and reconciled to absent himself from the State temporarily but he was totally opposed to abdication and reiterated his decision in a letter to Sardar Patel on May 6, 1949: Pages 95-99 *Heir Apparent*:

My dear Sardar Patelji,

With reference to the discussions I had with you on April 29 and May 1, 1949 I have been revolving the matter in my mind and am now in a position to let you have my settled reactions to the proposal in regard to my temporary absence from the State which you put to me.

I would like to say at the outset that I was completely taken aback by this proposal but coming as it did from you, in whom I have since the very beginning placed implicit trust and confidence and whose advice I have throughout followed on the many questions affecting me personally and my state both in the present and in future, I have been able somehow to adjust myself to it. I would not, however, be human if I did not express my sense of keen disappointment and bewilderment at having been called upon to make such a sacrifice of prestige, honour and position when all along I have been content to follow, sometimes even against my own judgment and conscience, the advice in regard to the constitutional position in the State which I have been receiving from the Prime Minister of India or yourself, sometimes even against arrangements which were agreed to only a few months before. Nor would it be fair on my part to conceal from you my own feeling that demand from my Prime Minister and while Sheikh Abdullah have been allowed his colleagues as a clear breach of the to depart from time to time as suited his many understandings on which inclinations from the pledged and written constitutional arrangements have word, to act consistently in breach of the been based from time to time and a loyalty which he professed to me before positive net of his disloyalty, treachery his release from jail and the oath of and deception.
allegiance which he took when he assumed2. Sheikh Abdullah should be clearlyoffice and to indulge openly along with his told to stop the campaign ofcolleagues in a campaign of vilification and vilification against me and tofoul calumny against me, both inside the abandon all activities, both on his partState and outside, I should have had to be and that of his followers, aimed atdriven from position to position- each of securing my abdication. I feel that thewhich I thought I held on the advice of the sacrifice which I am being calledState Ministry. upon to make would be in vain if I

The contrast naturally fills me with continued to be the target of their poignant feelings. However, once again public or private demands. putting my complete trust in your3. There should be a clear assurance ofjudgment and benevolent intentions protection of myself and mytowards us, I might be prepared to fall in adherents against any victimization.with your wishes and to absent myself In this connection I would likefrom the State for a period of three or four especially to draw your attention tomonths in consideration of the fact as the facts that have been reported toemphasized by you, namely complications me about persons having beencreated by the reference to U.N.O. and the detained in jail for their failure to signplebiscite issue. for my abdication.

There are, however, certain questions4. The question that I should remain outarising out of this proposal on which I of the State for three to four monthswould venture to make my position clear for reasons of health, will, I am afraid,to you and on which I would be grateful not be believed by anybody and isto have your assurance. I hope you will likely to give rise to many misgivingskindly appreciate the necessity of my and speculations within and outsideseeking these assurances. I have to think the State asof the immediate future in the light of my

bitter experience of the last several months i. Everybody knows that I am not and I owe to myself, my family and my in such a state of health as would dynasty to procure a clear declaration in necessitate a long rest outside the respect of these matters. State. I have, on your advice,

1. I should like to be assured that thisbeen recently touring parts of step is not a prelude to any idea ofJammu Province in the heat of abdication. I should like to make itApril.
clear now that I cannot entertain the ii. For everybody in bad health latter idea even for a moment and am Kashmir is considered to be the fully prepared to take the best health resort and it will consequences. I regard such a certainly look strange if I went outside the State giving out that I am doing so for reasons of health.

iii. Wherever I take my temporary residence I cannot confine myself to the four walls of the house. I am bound to meet people, who, when they meet me, will never believe that I am staying there for reasons of health.

iv. Some other reason which may be plausible and may also at the same time not compromise my dignity and position, should be given out. The best thing would be that the Government of India should find a suitable position for me in Delhi where my services may be utilized in a fitting manner during the above period of 3 or 4 months.

5. It is a matter of paramount necessity that Her Highness should remain with the Yuvraj in the State during the period of my absence. He is young and impressionable and needs paternal guidance and personal supervision of at least one of the parents. I can see no reason either of political expediency or justice in insisting on the separation of a mother from her only child whom she is seeing after thirteen months of absence abroad. Considerations of humanity alone should suffice to rule out this altogether.

6. My private estates, houses and other property should be protected against the aggressive acts of Sheikh Abdullah's party. They will attempt to take possession of my houses, gardens, lands and other property. The Indian Dominion should guarantee against that act of aggression. While I am there they dare not to do these things but in my absence they will attempt this. I have received information that even during the last few days, after I left Jammu for Delhi, encroachments have been made on my lands at Srinagar.

7. No change should be made without my consent in the present arrangements regarding the State Forces or the constitutional position, prerogatives, etc. of the ruler as now subsisting. Arrangements will continue for me to draw my staff (both State and Private Deptts) from amongst Officers of my Forces. Guards mounted by my Forces at my places will also continue as at present as per agreement reached vide my letter of 30th August and Mr. Menon's reply of 3rd September thereto. I shall also take whatever staff I require with me outside.

8. I should be entitled during my stay in India to suitable strength of military guards wherever I stay.

9. Yuvraj's safety and protection should be the concern of the Indian Dominion. The State and Indian Military should guard his person.

10. Outstanding matters with the State Military, Civil Lists, Hazur Departments, etc. should be decided with me immediately.

In conclusion I wish to say that I shall take the final decision on getting assurances from you on the points above mentioned.

With kindest regards,
Yours very sincerely,

Hari Singh New Delhi. Imperial Hotel May 6, 1949.
After about a fortnight, Sardar Patel's reply Highness' abdication does not arise. arrived from Dehra Dun. We have made the position quite

plain to Sheikh Mohammad Camp: Doon Court Abdullah, and we hope there will be

Dehra Dun
an end to the public controversies centering round this matter as well as to the derogatory references to

May 23, 1949 Your Highness in the press and on the

My dear Maharaja Sahib,
platform in the State. Your Highness, will of course, appreciate that the

Thank you for your letter dated May 6, future constitution of the State would 1949. be determined by the duly elected

1. I am very glad to know that Yourconstituent assembly. I am afraid, in Highness has reconciled yourself tothe absence of any specific instances the proposal which I put forward atof victimization to which Your my discussion with you. It was withHighness refers in Paragraph 4, it may no light heart that I did so. No onenot be possible for me to give any can be more cognizant than myselfassurance, but I can tell Your of the attitude which Your HighnessHighness that, if any such instances has adopted ever since you signed thearе brought to our notice, we shall Instrument of Accession. I amlook into them and try to see that grateful to Your Highness for the spiritjustice is done.

of cooperation and understanding 3. I appreciate what Your Highness says which you have always extended to in regard to the reasons for your me and also for the kind sentiments remaining outside the State, but I feel which you have expressed. I can that it would be best just to say that assure Your Highness that, before Your Highness has decided, after the putting forward my proposal, I had, strain of the last so many months and after careful consideration, come to continued ill-health, to stay out of the the conclusion that the interests alike State for a few months. The actual of Your Highness, the dynasty and period need not be stated.

the country demanded the step 4. We have carefully considered the which you have now agreed to take. question of Her Highness stayingI know full well the personal sacrifice with the Yuvraja during your absence,involved in it, but, I am sure, along but for various reasons, we feel thatwith so many other changes to which it would be best, for the present, forYour Highness has accustomed her also to stay away for a while. Later,yourself, you will undertake this step she can certainly visit the Yuvrajaalso with a sense of duty to your from time to time, and the Yuvrajacountry and in a spirit of calm can also visit Your Highness and Herresignation to the superior dictates of Highness occasionally.events.

2. Regarding the points which Your 5. We would be grateful if Your Highness has referred to me I should

Highness would let me have a list of the private estates, houses and other like to state that the question of Your property belonging to Your Highness and referred to in Para 6 of your letter. On receipt of the list we shall take up the matter with Your Ministry. In the meantime, I hope that, with the understanding that has been reached with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on the various controversial issues, he will himself take steps to safeguard Your Highness' property against encroachment. In particular, I hope that the feelings which he entertains for the Yuvraja will succeed in closing the chapter of the past several months and in introducing a healthy change in the approach of both the government and the National Conference workers to these and other problems affecting Your Highness and the family personally and the dynasty in general. I hope that no need for a change in the arrangements to which Your Highness has referred in Paragraph 7 would arise, but should any such need arise, we would of course consult Your Highness. We would

also make the necessary arrangements to guard you during your stay in India, and we take full responsibility for the Yuvraja's safety and protection.

6. As regards outstanding matters, we have already informed Your Highness separately that your civil list has been fixed at Rs.15 lakhs, out of which Rs. 6 lakhs would be paid by the State and Rs. 9 lakhs by the Government of India during the period of emergency. Out of this sum, Your Highness will have to make an allotment to Her Highness and the Yuvraja. The latter's expenses would, of course, be larger than before on account of his being Regent. I hope Your Highness will agree to make a suitable allowance for him, bearing in mind his needs. I should be glad to know your suggestions in this respect. Similarly, I should welcome Your Highness's proposal regarding Her Highness' allowance. As regards Hazur Departments, Sheikh Sahib has already agreed to our suggestion that an allowance of Rs.5 lakhs should be made to Your Highness for this purpose. A list of items which shall be controlled by Your Highness, and during your absence, by the Yuvraja as Regent, has been furnished to Sheikh Sahib and he has promised to let us have his comments as soon as possible. After his comments are received, we shall finalize the whole matter, but in the meantime, Your Highness can make a suitable allocation to major and other heads of the expenditure on State Departments from out of the allotment of Rs 5 lakhs.
With kindest regards,
Yours sincerely,

Vallabhbhai Patel

On the morning of June 20, 1949, Maharaja Hari Singh before leaving for Bombay, signed the proclamation which was brief. It read as follows:

Whereas I have decided for reasons of health to leave the State for a temporary period and to entrust to the Yuvraj Shri Karan Singh Ji Bahadur for that period all my powers and functions in regard to the Government of the State.

Now, therefore, I hereby direct and declare that all powers and functions, whether legislative, executive on judicial which are exercisable by me in relation to the State and its Government, including in particular my right and prerogative of making laws, of issuing Proclamations, orders and of

pardoning offenders, shall during the period of my absence from the State be exercisable by the Yuvraj Shri Karan Singh Ji Bahadur.

Hari Singh mileage.'[474] In June 1950, he sent two proposals to the figurehead of the State for his approval regarding the abolition of the Jagirdari (The feudal land grant system) and the landlordism without any compensation to the concerned parties.[475.]

MAHARAJA DHIRAJ

Maharaja Hari Singh accompanied by his staff and servants left by train early in the morning for Bombay never to return again at the helm of affairs in the State and Maharani, Tara Devi, for Kasauli with her maid servants. The newly appointed Regent 'poised between the weight of the past and burdens of the future' left by air for Srinagar to face the new challenges along with Vishnu Sahay, Secretary of Kashmir affairs, a senior member of the I.C.S. of long standing experience, was deputed by Pt. Nehru to help in putting the things in their proper perspective without any emotionalism or fanfare.[471]

Pt Nehru had specifically instructed the Yuvraj, Karan Singh, to work in harmony with Sheikh Abdullah who was riding at the height of power.[472]

Land Reforms

Sheikh Abdulla introduced the most radical and far reaching reforms in agriculture land following its declared policy of the 'land of the tiller' because the entire cultivated land in the State belonged to the ruler and his feudal vassals. The landlords used to rent their lands to the peasantry under medieval conditions of exploitation.[473] The State Government constituted a committee to prepare a plan for the transfer of land to the peasants which came out with the big handed Estates Abolition Act superceding most of the preceding measures. Sheikh Abdullah wanted to announce these reforms on Martyr's day, July 13, 1950, in a dramatic manner 'to gain maximum political The Regent of the State referred the matter to Delhi through Vishnu Sahay who was visiting Srinagar so 'the Indian Government could apply its mind to the implication of the proposals.' In a wellattended

gathering at Lal Chowk in Srinagar, Sheikh Abdullah announced the measures despite the fact that he had been called to Delhi to discuss the matter and that the measures were without the legal signatures of the Regent. This was the first of a series of a difference of approach and opinion between him and the Government of India that grew over the next few years and culminated in the dramatic events of August 1953.' [476] For refusing to sign the proclamation, Shri Yuvraj had safeguarded the national interest in the State and reposed the faith in Pt. Nehru. This was the beginning of the strained relations and the slow evaporation of goodwill between the Regent and Sheikh Abdullah, Dr. Karan Singh records the difference of opinion in his *Heir Apparent*, Page 121:'The basic difference between Sheikh Abdullah and me lay in the fact that while he looked upon himself as a Kashmiri who happened to find himself in India, I considered myself an Indian who happened to find himself in Kashmir.'

Constituent Assembly

In October 1950, the General Council of the National Conference passed a resolution recommending elections for a Constituent Assembly which would determine the future shape and affiliations of the Jammu & Kashmir State.[477]

Sheikh Abdullah continued a relentless drive of vilification against the Maharaja Hari Singh even though he had left the State. Not satisfied after having exiled him with active connivance of his mentor, Pt. Nehru, now he started to press for the abolition of the Dogra dynasty. For that he chose the mechanism of constituting a Constituent Assembly to frame a constitution for the State which was a broader political strategy to make the question of plebiscite redundant. [478] It was an excellent opportunity for Sheikh Abdullah to give a final blow to the Dogra dynasty and thus to fulfil his life's most cherished ambition for which he had once tried in May 1946 by launching his 'Quit Kashmir Movement' against the royal ruling family.[479]

Maharaja Hari Singh had entrusted the royal ruling powers to his son only to exercise in the normal course of time but the prerogative of issuing and signing the proclamation was still with the ruler as he had not taken the retirement from the State. Legally it was the responsibility of the

Government of India to consult him and ask for his comments regarding the formation of Constituent Assembly. On November 30, 1950, Vishnu Sahay, Secretary for Kashmir Affairs, wrote to the Maharaja enclosing a draft copy of the proclamation to be issued by the Regent.[480] The Maharaja wrote a detailed letter to Sardar Patel on December 10, 1950, raising several points which can be summarized as under:

" *That the proclamation, with the object and spirit of which I whole heartedly agree, should be issued by me as a ruler who is the properly constituted authority in law to promulgate it and not by my Regent.'*

Maharaja Hari Singh instructed Shri Yuvraj not to sign the proclamation without his approval until the matter be clarified by the Government of India.

On December 15, 1950, Sardar Patel died which was an irreparable loss to the nation leaving a vacuum that could never be filled. On January 25, 1951, the Secretary for Kashmir Affairs, Vishnu Sahay, directed the Regent to sign the proclamation as soon as he receives the 'submission from Sheikh Abdullah'. Meanwhile, Maharaja Hari Singh sought legal opinion from a leading Bombay based firm of lawyers, Kanga & Company, which he later submitted to the President of India. The opinion upheld the view that he remained ruler who alone had the power to sign a proclamation for the setting up of the Constituent Assembly. Unfortunately the question involved was not one of legal niceties but the harsh realities of political power.[481] On April 5, 1951, Gopalaswamy Ayyengar informed the Maharaja through a letter and convinced him about the urgency of the Indian Government to convene the Constituent Assembly:

'Developments have, however, since taken place both in the State and at Lake Success which makes it imperative that the issue of this proclamation is not delayed any longer. The Government of India is committed to the convening of a Constituent Assembly, the preparations for which are in active process in the State.'

In the view of the Government of India it must be convened, if both their commitments to the people of Kashmir and their stand at Lake Success are to be implemented, in spirit and in the letter. From the beginning they have

held that this Constituent Assembly should be called under the provisions of the Constitution of India and that this should be done, from both a tactical and constitutional point of view, on the authority of a proclamation issued by the Head of the State. The draft of the proclamation has been agreed between the Government of India and the Government of Jammu & Kashmir. No purpose will, therefore, be served by any act of Your Highness which holds up the signing and issue of this Proclamation by Shri Yuvraj. I hope, therefore, you will immediately lift the ban which you have placed on Shri Yuvraj affixing his signature to the agreed Proclamation and which has placed him in great embarrassment. Finally Maharaja Hari Singh relented and allowed his son to act on his own discretion and to sign the Proclamation.

Meanwhile the Prince-Regent received a letter from V.P. Menon urging him to sign the proclamation. The Regent of the State issued a proclamation on April 21, 1951, convoking a Constituent Assembly on the basis of free elections in the State over 21 years of age by means of a direct and secret ballot. People of the State had to elect 75 candidates, 45 of whom to represent Kashmir and Ladakh and the rest 30 to represent Jammu.

Sheikh Abdullah not only accused the Prince-Regent by levelling scathing attacks on his person for refusing to sign the proclamation in a public meeting a few miles from Jammu on April 9, but did not spare the Maharaja for instigating communal riots in 1947 in Jammu with slanderous insinuations. He continued to apply the same old dirty trick to torpedo the royal family instead of mending his ways and fascist style of rule. Sheikh Abdullah did not hesitate to threaten the Regent with dire consequences similar to one his father met. The conflict was leading to a bitter end.

Elections to the Assembly were held in mid October 1951 but the only effective opposition party, the Praja Parishad under the aegis of veteran and widely respected leader, Pt. Prem Nath Dogra, boycotted the elections and accused the Government of illegal practices and official interferences which resulted in the rejection of Praja Parishad nomination papers.[482] As a result of this, 72 out of the 75 members were elected unopposed on the National Conference ticket and the Constituent Assembly met on October 31,1951. Its Chairman declared," Kashmir was not interested in the United Nations,

which was the victim of the international intrigues. The path of Kashmir and the UN lay in different directions.

“It is well known that the National Conference had gone to the people of the State with a programme of accession to India and this programme of accession had been ratified by every single adult voter of the State.” Pt. Nehru sent greetings and best wishes to the opening session of the Assembly and stated that he was “sure that the people had voted, showed clearly that they were with the National Conference and with India.”[482A]

The formation of the Constituent Assembly was a subtle and shrewd move by the duo, Pt. Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah and the rest of the representatives of the Indian Government to ease out the legal and Constitutional head of the State from the political scene by showing it as an urgent political compulsion and that too the proclamation was signed by his own son.

A few days later, on November 5,1951, the Constituent Assembly formally adopted an amendment to the Constitution which virtually stripped the Maharaja’s powers, allowing him to act on the advice of the government, which in turn was made responsible to the Assembly.[484] The amendment replaced the Maharaja’s rule by the function of an elected Head of the State, Sardar-i-Riyasat and two days later twenty-one-year-old Yuvraj, Prince-Regent was elected to the office which was formally recognized by the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad.[485]

This act brought to culmination the abolition of the hereditary rule of the Dogra dynasty established by Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1846 and which had given a settled life to the Kashmiris from the centuries old sense of vulnerability. The man who had smashed the Dogra dynasty was now sowing the seeds of establishing a dynasty of his own.[485A]

Many prominent Hindus of Jammu in a meeting with Yuvraj Karan Singh asked him not to accept this new order and showed their apprehensions that he would only serve as a puppet for Sheikh Abdullah’s policies. Their statements were published in the Jammu and Indian papers, stirred up the spirit of the opposition and Pt. Nehru visited Srinagar to counterbalance the

opinion, advising the Yuvraj, Karan Singh, to accept the office. [486] 'Karan Singh was formally sworn in as 'Sadar-i-Riyasat' on November 17, 1952. On that occasion he spoke about the Kashmir dispute in terms which allowed for no optimism. The unfortunate tendency to equate the aggressor and the aggression's victim had led to a deadlock. Any attempt to impose an arbitrary solution seeking to circumvent this fundamental aspect could not be acceptable to us.'[486A]

From this time onwards till his arrest in August 1953, it was Sheikh Abdullah's sustained and systematic policy to maintain Kashmir autonomy against any infringement by the Indian Government. To tilt his weight in favour of autonomy beyond any doubt, Sheikh Abdullah in a public meeting on April 10, at Ranbir Singh Pura in Jammu criticized India for communalism and warned against applying the Indian Constitution to the State in all respects.[487] His speech caused an uproar in India and Pt. Nehru who always supported his policies did not like its content and tone.

Delhi Agreement: July 24, 1952

The Delhi Agreement dealt with various matters like residuary powers, citizenship, fundamental rights, the Supreme Court, the State flag, the President of India, the headship of the State, financial integration and emergency powers of the Union. Sheikh Abdullah stressed the basic points to which he had pointedly drawn the attention of the Assembly in his inaugural address: "We, as well as our learned friends from India, wished to strengthen and smoothen our relations. They never wished that Kashmir would drift away from India and we never wished to sever our relations with India. Both Parties feel that the ties binding us should become stronger and lasting."[488]

In August 1952, the Delhi Agreement which demarcated the Union and State jurisdiction was approved by the Parliament of India and the State Constituent Assembly. Placing the Agreement before the State Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1952, Sheikh Abdullah reiterated the Constitutional position: "It is of course the Constituent Assembly which is seized of these matters, to determine the extent and scope of the State's accession to India. The Assembly may agree to continue this relationship on

the present basis or extend its scope as it might like and consider feasible and proper."

There was no suggestion here of de-accession, let alone independence and nothing was farther from the mind of the National Conference leaders than accession to Pakistan.[489] In fact, the Constituent Assembly had adopted the Basic Principles Committee's recommendations that the State should continue to remain acceded to the Union of India.[490]

Praja Parishad

If anything accelerated the final break between Sheikh Abdullah and India, it was the Praja Parishad agitation in the winter of 1952-53 in Jammu province [490A] with the sole slogan of "*Ek Vidhan, Ek Nishan and Ek Pradhan"* to ensure the complete integration of the State but the Prime Minister of the State was clamouring for the autonomy and self-rule and had unleashed a reign of terror for a just cause. Praja Parishad's Civil Disobedience Movement in Jammu was also against the Muslim domination which was jointly supported by the Hindu Mahasabha, Bharatiya Jan Sangh and Ram Rajya Parishad in Delhi which had its serious repercussions all over India.[491]

Before launching this agitation, the leadership of the Praja Parishad adopted a resolution which said[491]: "All constitutional means to get redressed the genuine grievances of the people ventilated through Memoranda submitted to the Indian Union and the State Government but the Praja Parishad have not borne any fruit. There is no end to the vindictive and insulting attitude and the demoralizing policy of the State Government towards the people of Jammu. The people are not represented in the Cabinet and are subjected to tyranny, oppression and suppression and to avoid any untoward happenings in the province, the administration of Jammu province should be left in the hands of the Jammu people. They want provincial autonomy within the State. If this is not possible at the present juncture, the State should be taken control of by States Ministry and an outsider administrator be appointed for the Jammu province without delay. The Praja Parishad has been forced to launch a struggle to achieve their legitimate end but stands unreservedly for

complete and unconditional accession of the State to India and is prepared to make any sacrifice for that end."

Why the Praja Parishad was formed

There was no tradition of broad based political activity on a democratic basis in Jammu province because Pt. Nehru had put implicit faith in the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah. A fallacious feeling that the Dogras belonged to the ruling class, had created a false sense of self-complacency in them and they remained steeped in factional politics.[492] When the Maharaja was forced to leave the State, there was no political party in Jammu which created a political vaccum in Jammu. The National Conference could not fill this vaccum because of its past anti-Dogra animosity and lack of sympathy for the people of Jammu. It was a tough task to bell the cat by launching a new political organization in Jammu. To achieve the legitimate democratic rights, the Praja Parishad was formed soon after the provisional accession of the State with India and Mr. Hari Wazir, who later joined the Army as a Commissioned officer and died as a martyr in the defence of his homeland against Pakistani invaders, was the first President of this organization.[493] Within a short time, it became a solid organization with a network of branches all over the Jammu province and with a membership of one lakh. Its President Lala Roop Chand Nanda, was a practical man with a realistic approach to the problems being faced by the Jammuities.[494] His second in command were Pt. Shyam Lal, Mr. Durga Das Abrol and Thakur Sahdev Singh. Mr. Durga Das was the young General Secretary of this young organization and they had been entrusted the onerous responsibility to educate the people about the developments that have morphed the political scenario of the State.[495] Prem Nath Dogra was the undisputable leader, towering above the rest, with a long record of selfless service to the people. He was the tallest figure in the Praja Parishad who alone could deliver the goods in Jammu.[496]

The Jammu people were genuinely alarmed at Sheikh Abdullah's opposition to the complete integration of the State with India, the abolition of the Maharaja's rule had also hurt them and land reforms without any compensation had affected them more than the people of Kashmir.[497] The agitation was countered very strongly by the State Government, sometimes

even brutally, but it went on growing in strength and this in turn invited more reprisals.[498] Dr. Karan Singh records in his autobiography, *'Heir Apparent'*, about the alarming situation created by the agitation. Page 150: "*Even though I knew Jawaharlal's aversion to the Parishad, I felt it my duty to inform him about the true State of affairs. I prepared a detailed note which analysed the whole position and made certain concrete recommendations for political and economic measures that would help to meet the genuine aspirations of the people of Jammu and Ladakh.…… This I sent to Jawaharlal with a covering letter on December 22, 1952. I was quite frank. "The Situation is Serious", I wrote, "not in any military sense but in the sense that an overwhelming majority of the Jammu Province seem to be emphatically in sympathy with the agitation. Fundamentally responsible for this, I feel, are several deepseated and genuine economic and psychological reasons and I do not think it will be a correct appraisal to dismiss the whole affair as merely the creation of a reactionary clique. He further elaborates: 'I followed this with a visit to Delhi where I talked to Jawaharlal, the Home Minister, Dr. Katju and Dr. Rajendra Prasad and gave them my assessment of the situation. I urged that the Government of India must intervene so that the State Government reacts to the Jammu agitation not only with police repression but with concrete political, economic and administrative measures. Jawaharlal did write to Sheikh Abdullah in the same month, who replied with a long letter justifying the stand of his government and rejecting the whole Jammu problem as the work of communal organizations and a violent reaction on the part of Jammu landlords and upper classes.*

'As the Jammu agitation for its legitimate democratic rights showed no signs abating and, in fact, was taken up by likeminded parties in Delhi, specially the newly formed Bharatiya Jan Sangh headed by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee who was a member of the Constituent Assembly and was appointed as Union Minister of Heavy Industries, in the first National Government and N.C. Chatterjee who decided to launch a Satyagrah on an All-India basis.[499] Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee was a staunch nationalist who made every person in the parliament silent with his unique intellect and rhetoric. He was the youngest Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University at the age of 32 in 1934 and resigned against the Nehru-Liaqat Ali Pact. He strongly advocated to scrap the Central Government's dual policy towards Kashmir. The agitation in Delhi was also countered strongly by the Delhi

Administration and day after day the procession used to be dispersed by lathicharge. Sheikh Abdullah became extremely bitter and categorized this agitation as Hindus revivalism which was trying to swamp the Muslims of Kashmir and Muslim majority areas of Jammu.[500] Dr. Karan Singh writes in '*Heir Apparent'* Page 152: "*I was deeply disturbed because I realized that the final chance of building a new DograKashmir rapport, which alone could ensure the stability and welfare of the State, was being lost. I knew that Pt. Nehru was allergic to the Jan Sangh and Praja Parishad leaders. In a letter of 27 March I wrote: What really disturbs me is the fact that the gulf between Jammu & Kashmir has widened instead of being bridged seems to be steadily widening. Neither of the parties seems to quite realize the implications of this, and I fear that we may reap a very bitter harvest in years to come."*

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and Girdhari Lal Dogra, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister in Sheikh Abdullah's Cabinet, met Pt. Nehru in Delhi to discuss the whole situation arising out of this agitation. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad with a liberal outlook 'never displayed the aggressive anti-Dogra attitudes of Sheikh Abdullah and Mirza Afzal Beg. His whole stance viz-a-viz the Accession was also distinctly more amendable to consolidate the relations between the State and the Centre, and less charged with the Kashmiri chauvinism so sedulously fostered by Sheikh Abdullah.[501]

Demonstrations and processions against Sheikh Abdullah's estrangement policy became more frequent and in February 1953 after a violent outburst in Jammu, a curfew was imposed in Jammu Town for 72 hours, the army was called in to break up the procession, and the State Government Communiqué described the situation as '*extremely critical'*[502] The president of the organization, Pt. Prem Nath Dogra was among the hundreds who were arrested.

Pt. Nehru who had been courageously combating the ugly communal elements in Indian politics, could not ignore their voice, the more so since his own party, the National Congress had not remained entirely deaf to their cries.[503] The leaders of the Jan Sangh appealed to their followers to organize groups, (Jathas) to march towards Jammu. Sheikh Abdullah's

administration retaliated by repressive measures in Jammu by issuing an ordinance in May 1953, forbidding, under imprisonment, any person to enter the State without a special permit and issued a ban on public meetings.[504] Total censorship was clamped on the papers published from Jammu.

Throughout 1951 and 1952 certain ominous developments happened with Sheikh Abdullah turning increasingly autocratic in his ways and did not at all heed the advice of the Government of India. His personal relations with Pt. Nehru remained cordial but his utterances in public meetings against India were more critical. In April 1952, Gopalaswamy Ayyengar wanted to bring about a measure of integration between the State and India on financial matters by extending the jurisdiction of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the State but Sheikh Abdullah stoutly resented this move and accused the Government of India of wanting him to sign a promissory note.[506] Piqued by this attempt by the Government of India, he made a highly provocative speech at Ranbir Singh Pura the same month which was duly reported to Pt. Nehru who rebuked him for this but Sheikh Abdullah promptly denied the more objectionable portion as there was no doubt that he was trying to assert his independence.[507]

It was the firm belief of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee that India should not accept a system which permitted two Prime Ministers, two Constitutions and two national flags. The President of the Jan Sangh Party demonstratively made his entry in Jammu at Lakhanpur on May 8, 1953 without a special permit and paid the price of his life on June 23, 1953. Pt. Nehru was still in London where he was informed about Dr. Mukherjee's death in detention in Srinagar for which he showed his deep concern about the possible repercussions in India. Dr. B.C. Roy, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, sent a strongly worded telegram, demanding a thorough probe into the matter and wanted to know from Sheikh Abdullah why he had not been informed about Dr. Mukherjee's illness when he had been his family physician for years. Sheikh Abdullah did not feel it better to send a reply or even express regret and his attitude about Dr. Mukherjee was that as the founder-leader of the Jan Sangh, and the Praja Parishad had violated the law of the State. Sheikh Abdullah found that India was secular only in name but

was basically communal and so Kashmir could have no honourable place in India.

The circumstances in which Dr. Mukherjee died in the custody of the State Government were a cause of grave resentment and suspicion. Jammu was furious because Dr. Mukherjee had been martyred while fighting for the Praja Parishad cause and there was open talk that his death had not been from natural causes. The whole of India was shocked at this tragic event specially the people of Bengal who held Dr. Mukherjee in the highest regard.[508] Rumours about his death added new fuel to political passions which were already running high.[509]

His death forced the Central Government to bring about changes in the Indian Constitution and Jammu & Kashmir State was brought into the ambit of Indian Parliament, Supreme Court and Election Commission of India. Till 1953, these institutions did not have any important role in the State. At the beginning of July 1953, the Hindu Maha Sabha, Jan Sangh, Ram Rajya Parishad and Praja Parishad parties heeded Pt. Nehru's repeated appeals and called off the Satyagrah agitation for the complete integration of the State with India, with the explanation that the movement has achieved the purpose of impressing the country the urgent necessity of tackling the problem in an objective manner.[510]

Conflicts and Denouement

The Praja Parishad's Civil Disobedience Movement under the aegis of Pt. Prem Nath Dogra in Jammu and the Jan Singh agitation in Delhi for the complete integration of the State with India gave Sheikh Abdullah the much needed excuse to openly challenge India's professed secularism and he used this as a handle to prove that the integration of the State and particularly of the Kashmir valley and certain adjoining parts, which had Muslim majority with Hindu India would not be in the interest of the Muslims in Kashmir, and from then onwards Sheikh Abdulla openly propagated for a special status for Kashmir.[511]

Almost a year had elapsed since the 'question of implementing the 'Delhi Agreement' on the Constitutional relationship between the State and the

Centre that had been earlier worked out after prolonged negotiations between Sheikh Abdullah's team and representatives of the Government of India. While the discussion regarding abolishing the monarchy had been rapidly implemented because it suited the Sheikh but he had started dragging his feet as far as the other items were concerned.[512] The National Conference got divided into two factions when Sheikh Abdullah applied his favourite technique by initiating a debate within the National Conference Working Committee regarding the nature of the relationship with India. One group led by Mirza Afzal Beg, was vociferous in its view that the relationship should not go beyond the three subjects contained in the Instrument of Accession, while the other, led by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, Girdhari Lal Dogra and D.P. Dhar, was agreeable to a more comprehensive relationship covering other vital areas such as the judiciary, financial arrangements and so on. This tussle within the National Conference gradually assumed serious dimensions. Sheikh Abdullah threw his weight in favour of the hardliners. It was this development, even more than the Jammu agitation that began to disturb Jawaharlal."[513]

In a two long meetings with Sadri-Riyasat on April 21, and May 23, Pt. Nehru openly "admitted that he had no answer when asked in Parliament or outside as to why the Delhi Agreement had not been implemented. He was particularly hurt, even bewildered, at the hostile manner in which his old protégé and friend Sheikh Abdullah was acting and agreed with me when I remarked that unlimited power seemed to have brought out the Sheikh's worst fascist and totalitarian tendencies."[514]

Maulana Azad visited Srinagar for a few days with a mission to patch up the differences with Sheikh Abdullah but he pointedly ignored him and he was virtually insulted by the National Conference workers. His advice to the Prime Minister on his return was to dismiss Sheikh Abdullah before he could exceed all limits of committing more trouble for India.[515]

He turned down the repeated invitations of Pt. Nehru to visit Delhi, and it was becoming imminent that Sheikh Abdullah was clearly on the war path.[516]

Before leaving for London to attend the coronation ceremonies of Queen Elizabeth on June 2, 1953, Pt. Nehru paid a visit to Srinagar to ascertain his views for the non-ratification of the Delhi Agreement made on July 24, 1952. Sheikh Abdullah hoodwinked Pt. Nehru by telling him that he was ready to ratify the Delhi Agreement but Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq opposed the ratification and as such he was helpless in the matter.

Pt. Nehru immediately rushed to the residence of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and shouted at him for creating hurdles in the ratification of the Agreement.

Mr. Bakshi was shocked to know as to why Pt. Nehru was furious at him and when Bakshi asked him the reason about the matter that had disturbed him to this extent. On this Pt. Nehru gave him the details of the conversation he had with Sheikh Abdullah that he and Mr. Sadiq were the people who were coming in the way of ratification of the Delhi Agreement. It was then the turn of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad to clear the misgivings about the matter and he told Pt. Nehru that the shoe was on the wrong foot as they had been asking Sheikh Abdullah to ratify the agreement but he was refusing to do so.[517] After coming to know about the real matter, Pt. Nehru got more irritated and in his anger rushed to Sheikh Abdullah's residence and asked him to convene a meeting of the Working Committee of the National Conference as he wanted to address it himself but Sheikh Abdullah bluntly expressed his inability to do so.[518] This reply of Sheikh Abdullah completely exhausted the patience of Pt. Nehru and curtly told him, "*Sheikh Sahib, so far I had been dealing with you as Jawaharlal but now I shall have to deal with you as the Prime Minister of India.*" He then left for Delhi and from where on May 28, 1953, Pt. Nehru flew to London to attend the Queen's Coronation and the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference.

Sheikh Abdullah and Adlai Stevenson

The visit of Mr. Adlai Stevenson to the valley in the first week of May, 1953 and Sheikh Abdullah's frequent and long personal meetings with him alleged to have played a significant role in changing his mindset and

veering him round to the idea of Independent Kashmir. He fell in line with the American intrigue and got involved in an international plot to convert an independent Kashmir into '*Switzerland of the East.'* At the beginning of May 1953, Sheikh Abdullah had unleashed a campaign of vilification against the Indian Union and even Pt. Nehru and he put forth his demand for the Independence of Kashmir as well as for the complete withdrawal of the Indian Army from the State. It was rumoured in the Indian Press that he was to be proclaimed as the Independent Sultan of Kashmir with the full support of the Anglo-American Bloc.

Meanwhile the rift within the National Conference further deepened and the factions of the National Conference split openly and supported their differences in public meetings. It was a known fact that Sheikh Abdullah was favouring the hardliners led by Mirza Afzal Beg while most of the other senior leaders including G.L.Dogra, Sham Lal Saraf and D.P. Dhar, Deputy Home Minister, rallied behind Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad.[519] Sheikh Abdullah's speeches suggested that something fishy was being cooked up which would lead to deaccession to India. Sadar-i-Riyasat met Pt. Nehru in the third week of July and gave a detailed report about the events that were swiftly moving towards a cloak and dagger denouement[520]. On this occasion Pt. Nehru was seen in an extremely agitated and distressed mood. He was on the brink of taking a momentous and also an unpalatable decision which was being forced on him and which went against his very nature and line of thinking but the decision he had to take for the interest of the country.[521]

The independence minded Sheikh Abdullah stated that "Kashmir's initial accession to India wad forced on her because of India's refusal to give any help without the State's accession." He further said,"The accession to India is conditional and temporary in the sense that the people of the State have to ratify it. Therefore, it is not final." He also questioned the Delhi Agreement stating that it was transitory and temporary [522]. Besides his main source of information, the Sadr-i-Riyasat, Pt. Nehru also received inputs from the Intelligence Bureau (headed by B.N. Mullik, D.P. Dhar as well as first hand information from Maulana Azad and Pt. Nehru's close political confidant, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai. When Pt. Nehru enquired what should be done in the prevailing circumstances, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai pointed out that Sheikh

Abdullah had himself indicated the course of action and there should be no hesitation in throwing him out and Pt. Nehru was on the point of uprooting a plant which he had nursed with great care.[523]

Events were moving very swiftly and the scene was now complicated enough to climax the tragic drama of Kashmir and the actual course of action was determined by Sheikh Abdullah himself. On August 7, 1953, Sheikh Abdullah peremptorily ordered Sham Lal Saraf,(The Health Minister) to resign from the Ministry but he refused to resign. On the 8th morning Sham Lal Saraf sent to the Sadr-i-Riyasat the copy of a long letter to Sheikh Abdullah in which he accused him of having repudiated the declared policies of the National Conference concerning the relationship of the State with the Indian Union. “He refused to resign saying that the manner in which you have created a dangerous situation in the country by making highly inflammable speeches before the public, combined with your authoritarian attitude in the cabinet, have convinced me that instead of helping the difficult situation my resignation will encourage you to pursue your policies unbridled. Such a course will be suicidal for the country”.[524] Other members of the Cabinet like Bakshi, Sadiq, Dogra and D.P. Dhar supported Saraf and “accused Sheikh Abdullah in a memorandum of making arbitrary decisions, of being responsible for deterioration in the administration, despotism, inefficiency and wanton wastage of public resources”.[525] “You have tended to act in a manner that has generated uncertainty, suspense and doubt in the minds of the people of the State in general and of those in Jammu and Ladakh particular “, stated the memorandum, “All these factors have combined to strengthen the disruptionist forces seeking the disintegration of the State. You have arbitrarily sought to precipitate a rupture in the relationship of the State with India under these circumstances, what seems inevitable is that interested foreign powers may well take advantage of and exploit the situation for their own selfish purposes. You have connived in all these unfortunate happenings and thus strengthened and encouraged the forces of disruption. It is, therefore, with great pain that we have to inform you of our conclusion that the Cabinet, constituted as it is present and lacking as it does the unity of purpose and action, has lost the confidence of the people in it ability to give them a clean, efficient and healthy administration”.

The memorandum was submitted to the head of the State who suggested an emergency meeting of the Cabinet and he invited Sheikh Abdullah to see him as soon as possible so the differences could be sorted out before taking any drastic action. “He was going to Gulmarg that afternoon and came to my residence around noon. When I enquired about the situation he narrated three long though petty incidents regarding Sham Lal Saraf and disclosed that he asked him to resign. When I again stressed the necessity of doing something to rectify the situation he stated quite clearly that no internal solution was possible till there was some external solution acceptable to India as well as Pakistan’.[526]

On the same day Pt. Nehru called Brigadier B.M. Kaul and entrusted him with the task of passing on the word to Lt. General, Atal, Corps Commander at Udhampur and the Divisional Commander at Srinagar about the impending action.[527] At the same time, Pt. Nehru at the suggestion of Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, incharge Kashmir affairs, sent A.P. Jain to Srinagar as his representative to ensure that the administrative action was not hasty but was tailored to the political needs.[528] Inputs received by the Intelligence Bureau revealed that Pir Maqbool Gilani had established contacts with Pakistan and that an emissary was on his way to Tangmarg to meet Sheikh Abdullah. A.P. Jain representing Rafi Ahmed Kidwai in Srinagar, confirmed that Sheikh Abdullah left for Tangmarg probably to hatch his plans for a coup and so action for a change over had been decided on the night of 8th August.[528A]

Dr. Karan Singh in his *‘Heir Apparent’* records the strategy adopted to dismiss Sheikh Abdullah; page 161:

“Sheikh Abdullah was evidently expecting some international pressure to be brought upon India to grant virtual independent status to Kashmir, and this was quite obviously the reason why he was holding up the implementation of the Delhi Agreement which would further cement the relationship between the State and the Centre while I was reluctant that he should be arrested, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad made it quite clear that he could not undertake to run the government if the Sheikh and Beg were left free to propagate their views. Dismissing and detaining a sitting Prime Minister was no easy task as all plans had to be made in absolute secrecy.

The police had to be organized, the Indian Army kept discreetly informed and the media handled in an imaginative manner Luckily D.P. Dhar was a superb tactician who was at his best in such a situation and he had tied up all these details".

"When the ADC, Major Baldev Singh Bajwa and the police contingent under Deputy Inspector General of Police, Lachhman Das Thakur, finally reached Gulmarg, it was late at night, and the Sheikh and Begum Abdullah were fast asleep. With some difficulty and much knocking, he was awoken and handed the letter as well as a warrant of arrest. On reading it he flew into a rage and shouted, 'Who is the Sadar-i-Riyasat to dismiss me? I made that chit of a boy Sadar-i-Riyasat. But by then his house was fully surrounded by the police. He was given two hours to say his prayers and pack, during which we later learnt he burnt a number of documents that he had with him. This could have been prevented but we had given strict instructions to the police that he and the Begum were to be treated with courtesy. In the early hours of the 9th morning they were escorted to a car and driven out of the valley to the Tara Niwas Guest House in Udhampur where they were kept in detention. Mirza Afzal Beg and several others were also arrested that night in Srinagar and other parts of the valley."

To avoid a Constitutional gap in the administration after his dismissal, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad was invited by the Sadar-i-Riyasat to form the Government and in the early hours of 9th August, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and Girdhari Lal Dogra were administered the oath of office to deal with the tense situation that might develop as the news of Sheikh Abdulla's dismissal reached the masses of the valley.[529]

The Head of the State, Shri Yuvraja Karan Singh, the son of the Maharaja Hari Singh who had been exiled by Sheikh Abdullah, now avenged his father's removal from the State. Thus ended at least temporarily, the meteoric political career of a man who created awakening among the masses, acted as a dictator, manouvred as a Machiavellist and finally succumbed to realise his own dream of a Sultan.[530]

It was seen as a vigorous condemnation and complete rejection of the system which Sheikh Abdullah was going to implement.

The abrupt change in the Kashmir Government and the detention of Sheikh Abdulla was received in some quarters with shock and amazement, in others with satisfaction. Pt. Nehru made a statement in the Parliament that the Government of India had been informed about the crisis in Srinagar, "but our advice was neither sought nor given." He explained that Sheikh Abdullah, his political friend of twenty years had been detained "in the interest of the peace of the State, which was threatened in various ways." Pt. Nehru disclosed that the dilemma of choosing between personal friendship and political interests, he preferred the integrity of the country.[531] "In Karachi Fatima Jinnah, the sister of the late founder of Pakistan, led a procession of demonstrators who in a resolution appealed to "the Pakistanis to volunteer their services and join their Kashmir brethren in their righteous cause and fight for freedom." The newspapers accused India of having over thrown Sheikh Abdullah until then a Quisling in the opinion of the Pakistanis but now, through a twist of history which did not lack its somewhat comical aspects, almost a martyr in the struggle of the Kashmiri Muslims."[532]

Pt. Nehru never reconciled to Sheikh Abdullah's detention and time and again raised the question of his release because he was opposed to any detention without trial as he himself had suffered the agonies of imprisonment under the British and he was ideologically opposed to detentions for political reasons.[533]

EPILOGUE

The early period of his rulership would always be remembered as the golden period for reforms and modernization of the State. Maharaja's Hari Singh declaration in 1942 that his would be the first State to join Independent India, became the rallying point for the political parties and the rulers of the Princely States.

His deep concern for the safety of his subjects both Hindus and Muslims in the turbulence as a result of partition compelled him to accede to India. There were other domestic pressures which he faced with dogged resistance and sagacity.

The map of India would have been different if on October 20, 1947, he had not changed the programme and perhaps the course of the history would have been entirely something else when the Bhimber came under heavy enemy fire to which his Prime Minister, Mehr Chand Mahajan, had protested for a change in the schedule of the tour.

“Maharaja Hari Singh had been extremely misunderstood and wronged ruler who ruled the State for a quarter of a century. Soon after the change of power from the Dogra dynastic rule to socalled popular government in the State which came into power in the wake of thecountry’s partition along with its independence from the British occupation, a consistent virulent campaign was launched by the new power centres in the State as well as in Delhi against Maharaja Hari Singh for all the wrongs and denying him the credit for his clean administration, liberal thinking and patriotism which was rarely found among the Princely Rulers of the Indian States.”[534]

‘The Muslims in the State were better placed than the Hindus in the Hyderabad State who formed 90 per cent of the population but whose ruler was a Muslim. Nawab of Palampur was one of his best friends so was Nawab Khusro Jung, a Muslim from Hyderabad who was his Minister-in-waiting and Army Minister for many years. Maharaja Hari Singh’s personal staff such as ADC’s and others often consisted of Muslims even his cooks were Muslims until a planned but unsuccessful attempt to poison him through one of them was detected which alerted him.”[535]

“Suggestions came from some quarters and asked the Maharaja to meet Pt. Nehru for a favourable consideration of his case but he was the Rana Pratap of his time. Once Pt. Nehru visited Bombay and stayed in a house next to his but in order to avoid him, the Maharaja Bahadur left for Poona.

“He submitted a printed memorandum consisting of 90 pages to President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the receipt where of was acknowledged by Pt. Nehru. In that memorandum he had not pleaded for any personal favour from the Union Government but had exposed the SheikhPt. Nehru nexus.”[536]

Maharaja Hari Singh has been repeatedly accused of delaying the Accession but nobody has tried to understand him, his mind and the times he was passing through. Firstly the State had no road connectivity with the rest of India as rail and road routes have gone to Pakistan. Maharaja Hari Singh's rejection of Lord Mountbatten's advice was also not totally without justification. By suggesting that the Maharaja should act only in accordance with the wishes of his people, Mountbatten was depriving the Maharaja's prerogative granted to him by the British themselves through the Indian Independence Act and there was nothing surprising about the Maharaja trying to resist it. But even if he was to surrender his right, how was he to ascertain the wishes of his people so fast before the 15th August?"[537]

Maharaja Hari Singh would eternally stand out as a towering personality for his unquestionable patriotism and unflinching commitment for India's freedom at the Round Table Conference but he suffered for others' egos and fancies. "During a visit to Jammu after the Maharaja's voluntary exile, Pt. Nehru was greeted by people with banners and placards demanding the return of the Maharaja. Pt. Nehru got enraged and in his speech at Parade Ground, Jammu city where Sheikh Abdullah was also sitting on the platform, Pt. Nehru declared that the Maharaja who had the audacity to arrest me, would never be allowed to return Jammu. He shocked everyone by raising his voice and saying in Hindi, "*Mein usko ane dun jisne mujhe qaid kiya, mein jo wazirazam Hind bananewala tha" (shall I allow him to come back he who arrested me who was to become the Prime Minister of India.)*[538]

'Radcliff facilitated Kashmir's accession to India a few months late after the boundary award was announced. Gurdaspur district had a rail head and the only fair-weather road connection with Jammu and Kashmir then available on the Indian side and the ability of the Indian forces to defend the State with access from northern plains otherwise blocked by high mountains, would thus have been handicapped without it, at least until alternative routes have been developed.'[539]

Pt. Nehru had planted in Lord Mountbatten's mind the absolute necessity that the possession of Gurdaspur district be denied to Pakistan in order to make State's accession to Indian Union possible. Pt. Nehru's unhesitating

ambition in regard to the State and his foresighted vision kept Kashmir in India.[540]

Sheikh Abdullah's aspirations since the beginning of his political career had been that Kashmiris should get rid of the Dogra Rule and he as their popular leader should wield power to re-build a new Kashmir. Pt. Nehru had been sympathetic towards him and actively helped him to achieve his goal. On the other hand, Mr. Jinnah and other Pakistani leaders looked upon Sheikh Abdullah as their staunch opponent because he had refused to abandon his basic loyalty to the Indian National Congress and Pt. Nehru had given him effective support against the Maharaja Hari Singh. Sheikh Abdullah had realized that Kashmir's accession to Pakistan through the tribal conquest would mean Pathan and Punjabi hegemony over Kashmir.[541]

'Mr. Jinnah exploited religious symbols and Islamic slogans to mobilize Muslims against the Hindus as a political force. He always claimed to protect the political and economic interests of Muslims of the subcontinent but left behind many more Muslims in India as a mistrust minority that could be accommodated in the new Islamic State he created for them.'

Pt. Nehru's plebiscite offer at the U.N.O. turned Kashmir into an international issue which even today is hanging in the air and gave Pakistan an iron stick to stroke the fire.

Sardar Patel would have comfortably resolved the subcontinent's thorniest dispute, had Pt. Nehru permitted him to handle the Kashmir affair on the pattern of Junagarh, Hyderabad and Bhopal, there would have been no Kashmir imbroglio at all.

The Fall of Deva-Vatala:

"The fall of Deva-vatala along the Jammu Pakistan border in Bhimber Tehsil showed the callousness of Sheikh Abdullah's administration towards the people of Jammu. The war like people of these villages inhabited by Chib Rajputs, kept the Pakistanis at bay for sometime with their crude weapons. But when Pakistanis attacked them with modern firearms, they approached Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, the chief emergency officer for Jammu Province. But they were not provided to them although arms were

sent to Kashmir to arm the militia. Ziladar Prabhat Singh, wailing before the popular leader of Jammu, Pt. Prem Nath Dogra, said that he got no arms in spite of repeated efforts and there was no hope of their safety. Within a few days towards the end of December 1947, thousands of Chib, Bhan and Langeh Rajputs were entering the Jammu city with their meagre belongings on their heads as refugees.[542]

Maharaja Hari Singh's reign became synonymous with the reforms, development programmes and pro-people policies which he implemented with gusto from day one when he inherited the Rajgaddi of Jammu & Kashmir State till the last breath of his rulership when he was forced to leave the State.

Sweeping reforms through a series of well planned and executed measures were initiated in the State by none other than the ruler himself after his ascendancy to the throne of Jammu & Kashmir State on September 23, 1925, after the death of this mentor uncle, Maharaja Pratap Singh, who touched every sphere of public life. He adopted liberal and progressive policies, which showed that he was immensely interested "in the socio-economic regeneration of his people."

In the Aeschylean phrase, the President of the Immortals had done his support with the life of a noble soul, the most beloved and benevolent Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu & Kashmir State on April 26, 1961. In his death Jammu was plunged into a pall of gloom and deep sorrow. Nobody of his blood was beside him in his final moments when he breathed his last. His son, Dr. Karan Singh, then the Sadar-i-Riyasat of Jammu & Kashmir State along with his Yuvrani, Yasho Rajaya Laxmi, had left for a Europe tour only two days earlier. Her Highness, Raj Mata, Tara Devi, had settled down at Alhilal after her estrangement and so she could not reach Bombay in time to have the last *darshan* of her former ruler husband.

The tragic flaw in the ruler's life was the Nehru-Sheikh nexus, which culminated in his forced abdication and then his removal from the State after the Constitutional changes were kick started. He adopted a road of isolation, completely distanced himself from the affairs of the State, observed a stoic silence, and never pleaded his case before the central leadership.

He was cremated at the Chandanwadi crematorium at seven in the evening. As suggested by Pt .Prem Nath Dogra that his funeral at Bombay should synchronize with a homage at the bank of River Tawi. So a procession of bureaucrats, High Court Judges, high-ranking military and police officials and prominent citizens started from Mubarak Mandi and reached Jogi Gate to pay homage to the departed soul.

Floral wreaths were placed on his dead body on behalf of Jenab Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, the then Prime Minister of Jammu & Kashmir State and Sh. Prakasha Rao, the then Governor of Maharashtra and also by the Swatantra Party leader, Mr. Piloo Modi, with whom the Maharaja had very good vibes. His last rites were strictly performed, according to Arya Samaj customs as per his will, by his personal attendant, Nasib Singh Slathia.

Maharaja Hari Singh was a modernist and a great reformer only after Raja Ram Mohan Roy who wanted to transform the society into a prosperous and socio-economically developed entity.

Soon after the Coronation ceremonies which took place from February 14 to February 24, 1926 were over, he extensively toured the length and breadth of the state and came into close contact with the people of the State. It dawned on him that the basic cause of the economic servitude of the rural community was the economic exploitation, which made the farmer an easy victim of moneylenders' horrible tentacles. He embarked on a mission to have had speedy and fast paced progress of the State and to fulfil his goal of ameliorating the woes and sufferings of his subjects from their crushing poverty and the ghettoized life they were leading.

His plethora of reforms started with the release of the peasantry, forming eighty per cent of the population from the moneylenders' clutches and exploitation. He abolished the Sahukari system with one master stroke and established co-operative and agricultural credit societies from where farmers could avail themselves of financial facilities. He introduced free but compulsory primary education in all municipal towns and opened 'Jabri' schools for the underprivileged classes of the society and distributed the stationery free of cost.

Three main hospitals with ultra modern equipment were constructed in Jammu, Srinagar and at Mirpur. “Several leper asylums and centres for anti-rabic treatment were provided to the common people and maternity blocks were added to zenana hospitals.” A network of road connectivity and bridges were constructed to give boost to trade and commerce in the State. “To stop the menace of floods, flood control works were undertaken. Industrial board was established and industrial exhibitions were arranged at every Tehsil headquarter. Mining resources of the State were exploited during his reign.” He banned child marriage and smoking among children by enacting laws, favoured widow remarriage and protected their rights by giving them honorable status in the orthodox society. He allowed the entry of Harijans in the temples and places of worship and they could share the water from the common wells and tanks. He gave freedom of speech and expression by enacting a law in April 1932 and permitted newspapers to be published from the State.

He enacted through a communiqué the Hereditary State-Subject “which immediately debarred non-resident subjects’ employment in the State.” He established a High Court on the pattern of the British India and Judicial Advisory Board so that his people should not be bereft of justice. He created a political awakening among his people “by establishing a Praja Sabha of both elected and nominated members” in October 1934.

He was the first rule of Jammu & Kashmir State among the 560 rulers who supported the cause of India’s freedom at the First Round Table Conference held in the House of Lords in London from November 15, 1930 to January 12, 1931. As Vice Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, “he endorsed the statement of the Bikaner Maharaja for an All India Federation.” During this conference, “which was presided by the British Crown where he declared that ***I am an Indian first and then a Maharaja”***, and for his patriotism he had to pay a heavy price as before his return to his State, nasty plans by the British were afoot to dethrone him.

The person whose ***‘Religion was Justice’*** and who dispensed justice through out his life was denied justice by the Delhi ruler because of his adamant attitude towards the Maharaja. Even the posts and telegraph department had not the courtesy to issue a stamp in his honour.

There was no one to chant a dirge at his dead body and no one to write a panegyric for the thrust of reforms which he introduced with an impassioned zeal for the betterment of his subjects.

The urn containing the ashes of Maharaja Hari Singh was brought to Jammu by air on May 1, 1961. Mortal remains of Maharaja Hari Singh were immersed in the holy water of river Tawi by his son Dr. Karan Singh who was accompanied by multitudes of people and his ashes were scattered in the city of his birth.

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